

No Longer Alone

A Zelink Romance

by

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Originally Posted on the Archive of Our Own

Rating: Explicit (Graphic Violence, Explicit Sexual Content)

Relationship Category: F/M

Fandom: The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild

Published 2021

Summary: One year after defeating Calamity Ganon, Zelda has taken refuge in Hateno Village. She continues to research the wonders of Hyrule with her friend, the mischievous Purah, and she has even accepted Link's generous offer to stay at his house. Despite living under the same roof, however, she has never felt so far apart from Link. She fears that any of the magic that once existed between them is now gone forever.

When a strange glow emanates from the Forgotten Temple, Zelda and Link must travel across Hyrule to investigate. They seek refuge in the many stables along the road, but at times, they are forced to pitch a tent and brave the wilderness. Will this journey through the heart of Hyrule bring the princess closer to her sworn knight, or will her stamina run low as she waits for Link to return her affections?

Spoiler Warning: This story takes place after Breath of the Wild and serves as a (theoretical) prelude to the upcoming sequel. It also has an open ending that leads into the 2019 sequel trailer.

Chapter 1

Sparks flew off the luminous stone, the wild, electric blue lights shimmering like ghosts in Purah's goggles. The lights were so bright and mesmerizing. Zelda tried to adjust the focus on her own goggles as she leaned in for a closer look, twisting the copper knobs around her lenses.

"Check it!" said the little scientist, switching off her blowtorch and jumping about with excitement. Zelda tried not to laugh, even though the goggles did make Purah look like a happy little chameleon dancing in place.

The princess of Hyrule examined the stone, her eyes drifting up and down the jagged line Purah had carved with her blowtorch. "I'm afraid I don't see anything, Purah," she said.

"Not so close, princess!" cried Purah, climbing down from her step ladder and grabbing Zelda's hand. She pulled the princess several paces away. "You keep those goggles on now, you hear? And wait for it..."

The luminous stone was inert, and the electric blue light faded away as they watched. Zelda furrowed her brow and looked down at Purah, who was twirling a strand of white hair with one little finger and smiling like an imp. The moment dragged on, and Zelda was about to ask for an explanation when the stone came to life.

The electric blue light rushed back to the surface of the stone, and as impossible as it would seem, it was so much brighter than before. Zelda shielded her eyes, although the goggles did offer the protection that Purah intended. The light did not stop once it reached the surface, however, and soon

enough it exploded out of the black rock. Surprised by the reaction, she flinched and let go of Purah's hand as aquamarine light shot towards the ceiling, twirling around in strange wisps of energy.

She heard the patter of little feet as Purah ran for the windows. The little scientist threw open the shutters, letting pure daylight pour into the dark and musty laboratory. Zelda gasped in horror as the blue-green wisps turned on her, but when she stepped aside to let the energy pass, it became clear that the wisps of light were only interested in escaping through the windows. Purah clapped her hands as the energy raced out of the window, disappearing into the skies above Hateno Village.

"Yaaaay! Be free and happy, my dears!" shouted the scientist, taking up her little dance once again.

Zelda rushed to the window, so glad she wore the customary garb of a scholar. She had worked long enough with Purah to expect a bit of excitement, and her fitted pants coupled with supple, leather boots allowed her to move freely should the occasion call for it. Her boots skidded to a stop alongside Purah. She leaned out of the window and watched as the strange wisps vanished into the clouds.

"What was that, Purah?" she asked, pulling back her long, blonde hair as she watched the skies in wonder.

"A better question may be who, princess. Who was that?"

The princess turned to face the scientist, who was grinning like the cat who swallowed all of the canaries. "Who? Do you mean say that trail of light was—"

"Soul energy? I'm a top-tier researcher, your highness. I do not claim to know all there is to know about the wonder we just witnessed, but if the traditional folklore of this region is to be believed, the pale blue glow of the luminous stones are, in fact, the souls of the dead."

Purah held up her hands and wiggled her tiny fingers, finishing off her sentence in a deep, mysterious tone of voice. Zelda stared at her friend in bewilderment, and Purah laughed.

“Never fear, my dear princess! I do not subscribe to such simple superstition and bedside stories. I do believe, however, there is always a kernel of truth in the old tales. And that is exactly what Robbie and I discovered when we began investigating the properties of luminous stone. Come, let’s take a closer look at the innards of this hunk of rock.”

Zelda stood next to Purah as the little scientist climbed up her ladder, grabbing the chisel and hammer from her tool belt. Purah drove the chisel into the black rock with a strength that seemed unnatural for her childlike body, and she delivered an equally surprising blow to the top of the chisel with a swing of her hammer. The rock crumbled into two asymmetric halves, and Zelda had to look twice to make sure her eyes were not playing tricks on her.

A good portion of the inside surface was plain and uninteresting, but running along the middle of the right half, there were glowing runes carved into the rock.

“Words. Purah, is that the Zonai language?”

“You have a good eye, princess,” said Purah, hooking the tools back onto her belt. “I haven’t studied the language as much as Robbie, but I may be able to translate a piece here and there.”

The scientist peered closely at the runes, whispering to herself as she conjured up the memory of her studies. “The first bit could say something along the lines of, *How long must we wait?* As for the last part, your guess is as good as mine.”

Zelda’s eyes grew wide in astonishment. “Then, the energy

you released from the stone... It was sentient?”

“Yes, princess. Sentient, and trapped inside, the poor dears.”

This revelation was stirring a flurry of emotions inside Zelda. She crossed her arms and began pacing the length of the laboratory, pausing beside the open window in deep thought.

“Purah, how do we know that these energy beings are benign? What if there was a reason that they were trapped?”

“Oh, please. They’re completely harmless,” said Purah, waving her hand dismissively as she turned her attention to a blueprint on her desk. “I released several of the wisps using safety measures and a controlled environment. Robbie can back me up. We monitored the energy of a dozen luminous stones before setting it free into the atmosphere. The wisps have no interest in the living body. They are creatures of air and electricity.”

Zelda bit her lower lip in concentration, gazing out at the cloudy skies above Hateno. She wanted to believe her friend, and Purah was certainly one of the most respected minds of Hyrule. However, the princess knew that the little scientist was also the type to charge ahead once she was inspired. The thrill of discovery often pushed great minds to walk along the edge of disaster.

Thunder rumbled in the distance. A bolt of lightning struck the eastern horizon. Zelda shivered as a cold wind blew through the lab. She removed her goggles and reached outside the window, closing the shutters against the coming storm.

“I should return to the village ahead of the rain, Purah. Perhaps we should continue this discussion tomorrow evening?”

The little scientist looked over at Zelda and smirked, letting one of her eyebrows waggle in a suggestive way. “Of course,

princess. You wouldn't want to keep Linky waiting."

Zelda knew that her friend was only teasing, but she also couldn't stop the blush that blossomed in her cheeks. "Now, it's not like that at all. Link is a perfect gentleman, and he only offered me a place to stay until the Bolsons have rebuilt the castle."

"Of course. I meant no disrespect, your highness. I'm sure Link respects your boundaries and there's no funny business going on. Then again, I've also seen the way he looks at you."

The princess carefully tucked the goggles away in their leather satchel, shaking her head in disbelief. "Every time he sees me, Link runs away. He's always going off on his own, fighting monsters or wandering through the forest. He may have invited me to live with him, but I don't think he can look at me without remembering the past and... and everything we lost. No, Purah, we are like distant strangers living under the same roof."

"Well, if that's the case, I'm sure Link wouldn't object to you staying here. We could clear out some space in the tower."

As Zelda reached for her midnight blue cloak, she pursed her lips and stared at the floor. "I'll think about it. Thank you, Purah," she said. "Please, don't tell Link about this, at least not yet. I do appreciate his generosity and kindness, but it may be time to move on."

"Mm, time changes all things. Take care, princess. We'll dig a little deeper tomorrow and snap up some answers, shall we?"

The princess smiled as she wished her friend well, pulling up the hood of her cloak as she stepped out of the ancient tech lab. A light drizzle of rain was falling over the hills, and it wasn't long before her leather boots were stained with mud as she walked down the path.

She paused next to one of the blue torches, looking down

into the cute little village that had welcomed her after such a long ordeal. A warmth grew inside her as she thought of sweet, industrious Ivey sweeping the path to the East Wind General Store. She wondered if Prima was cooking a warm beef stew for her guests tonight, and she chuckled as she thought of the children running about and singing their little songs. She hoped they were all indoors now, warm beside their fires as they listened to the rain. As blue sparks fluttered in the rain like dancing moths, Zelda looked beyond the market square to a little house across the river.

And there he was, a lone traveler moving swiftly over a bridge. He wore a bow on his back and a sword at his side. He walked with the poise and confidence of a soldier, because that was what he was. He was her soldier, her very own sworn knight who was destined to banish the darkness. If only he would banish the emptiness inside her...

She watched Link cross the bridge, heading towards the forest below. He would most likely be hunting monsters into the late hours of evening. It was noble of him to serve the townsfolk, protecting them from the remnants of Ganon's hordes so they could sleep better at night. Why, just the other night he had rescued two sisters who were being attacked by bokoblins during their truffle hunt. They wouldn't stop singing his praises, those beautiful sisters. They were absolutely smitten with the Hero of Hyrule now.

Zelda sighed and made her way down the hill, knowing full well that an empty house and a lonely sleep awaited her at the end of the road.



The princess gripped the brush tightly as she pulled it through her long, blonde hair, staring wistfully at her reflection in the bedroom mirror. She crossed her legs while sitting upon a small stool, her bare feet resting on the hardwood floor. The lanterns hanging from the ceiling were

swaying a bit as the storm raged outside. She laid her brush down and leaned over the balcony to watch the swaying lights.

She hoped Link was safe, especially if he was carrying weapons through the forest.

Zelda stood up in a huff, unfastening her belt and pulling off her damp shirt. She knew that Link would be fine. He survived the wilderness in his quest to save Hyrule, didn't he? He had tamed the fury of four divine beasts and vanquished the horrors within. Together, they had defeated Calamity Ganon, had they not?

Together. It was the last thing they had done together. They had felt the rush of victory as Link struck the beast with a light arrow. She could remember the sound of his heart beating from afar as she unleashed her powers, vaporizing the terrible beast in a blaze of energy. Her own heart had been racing like a mighty steed as Ganon cried out in one final roar of malice.

Would they ever share this feeling again? Now that the dangers were behind them, would their hearts ever beat as one?

"Don't be silly," she muttered, draping her shirt over the desk chair and slipping out of her fitted pants. She gripped the black fabric and pulled it over her thighs, her calves, and finally over her curled toes. The princess shivered a bit as she removed her undergarments, moving quickly to the dresser so she could wrap herself in a long nightgown.

As she lifted the gown from the dresser drawer, though, she looked up at her reflection in the mirror. Her breasts were beautifully shaped, round and fresh as palm fruits. She admired the curve of her hips and the smooth skin that was so soft to the touch. Her thighs were a little wide, in her opinion, but Urbosa had once told her that this was a sign of strength. She was always quick to remind Zelda that beauty

comes in all shapes and sizes, and the love of her life would certainly be lucky to lay his or her hands on such gorgeous thighs. Zelda smiled at the memory. She missed her godmother so much.

As the princess turned her body around in the mirror, her hands drifted down the curve of her hips. She tried to imagine her future lover touching her in this way. A strange impulse of desire guided her fingers to brush the sides of her hip, the curve of her vagina, the roundness of her bottom. Yes, he would move his hands over her in this way, his calloused palms gripping her with pure desire as they climbed to the highest point of pleasure. They would give in to their impulses, every last one of them, and as her imagination ran wild, she surprised herself by slapping the side of her buttocks. A red handprint appeared on her skin, and now she believed Urbosa's words that her lover would be such a lucky man.

Not bad for someone who just turned one hundred and eighteen, she thought to herself, turning to admire herself from another angle. As she turned in the mirror, though, she saw him standing behind her.

Link was still at the top of the stairwell, his left hand wrapped around the railing and his back foot resting on the last step. As Zelda turned around to face him, barely covering herself with the folded nightgown in her hands, she watched as his face turned as red as a hearty radish. He stared at her for a moment, his eyes wide under hair that was dripping wet. Purah was right. The way he was looking at her... Zelda could see the desire practically sparkle in his eyes. But Link soon remembered himself, turning away from her and bolting down the stairs.

"Link! Oh, Link, it's alright!" she cried, but he had already disappeared under the stairs by the time she reached the edge. The princess pressed the gown over her naked body, knowing she should feel ashamed at her lack of modesty, but she didn't feel that way at all.

She wanted him to see her, and once again, he had run away.



For the thousandth time, Zelda rolled to the other side of the bed, her body tangled in a multitude of blankets. She looked down the length of the balcony floor, watching the clouds pass by the window. A shaft of moonlight peered through the cloud cover, crawling across the floor and ending just before it touched her bed.

The storm outside had long since subsided, replaced by a light drizzle of rain that pattered against the rooftop, but the storm inside her was raging like no other.

She gripped one of the blankets, willing herself to sleep even though she knew a good night's rest was beyond her. She spread her legs over the bedsheets, her face pressed against the cotton as she breathed the musky smell hidden within the fabric. The sheets still smelled like him. This had been his bed, before she had arrived, and she tried to find comfort in his lingering presence. When this failed, she grabbed the second pillow and wrapped her legs around it, pressing it against the rising warmth of her middle. She began to rock gently against the pillow, her toes curling with the expectation of pleasure.

The princess panted in frustration, her forehead lightly perspiring as she moved back and forth. There was no substitute for the real thing, and she so needed a release.

As she regained control of her breathing, though, Zelda paused. She could still hear the sound of heavy breathing, and it was somewhere nearby. Curiosity got the better of her, and she slid off the side of her bed. Her feet gently touched the woven mat by her bedside, and she made certain to step between the creaking floorboards as she moved to the edge of the balcony.

The lantern lattice had long since dimmed, and she could only make out a vague outline of the kitchen table and the weapons mounted along the wall. She could still hear it, though, a deep, masculine gasp for air. Was Link in trouble? She swept her eyes over the dark and desolate room, desperate to find a trace of her loyal knight.

She looked beneath the balcony, directly under her feet, and that was when she found him.

A shaft of moonlight fell over the mat, revealing blankets strewn about his feet and a bedroll propped under his reclining body. It was his body, however, that caught Zelda's attention. Link had pulled his blue undergarments down over his ankles, and the princess felt a shiver run through her as her eyes drifted over his ankles, his shins, those strong, muscular thighs. She nearly took leave of her senses, though, when she caught sight of his enormous cock, curving in the moonlight.

She watched as Link ran his hand down the length of his member, stroking up and down in a beautiful rhythm of motion. Zelda bit her lower lip to stop herself from moaning, but it was so hard to hold it in as Link spread a glistening oil over his cock. The oil dripped from his hand down the long shaft, his sandy pubic hair glittering with droplets of liquid. He used his other hand to rub the excess oil over his pectoral muscles, causing the rolling muscles on his chest to shine like smooth stones in a river bed.

She put her hand over her mouth, unable to tear her eyes away. He was so gorgeous, and his cock was so huge. She started to imagine what it would be like to slide the whole length of him into her body, and before she knew what she was doing, Zelda had lifted the corners of her nightgown to rub herself in small, gentle circles.

She was glad that the rate of his breathing had increased. Perhaps he wouldn't notice the tiny gasps coming from

above. She reached into her undergarments and placed her fingers along her labia, rubbing up and down her lower lips to match the sensational rhythm of Link as he stroked up and down his cock.

Down below, she noticed a droplet of milky fluid emerging from the tip of Link's penis. She knew it was a herald of something wonderful. Zelda licked her lips in anticipation of such a sight. She rubbed the folds of her vagina with renewed vigor as she watched Link rub himself to the heights of pleasure.

Yes, she thought. We share the same need. I can hear his heart beating. It's beating as fast as mine. Is he thinking of me? Is he remembering my naked body as he strokes the shaft? Oh, if only we could be together now, our bodies pressed against one another. If only I could feel his manhood throbbing within me, ready to release such a magical potion. It would spread through my insides, exploding outward in a wonderful... yes. Oh, yes!

Her fingers were wet as she watched his cock tremble and pulse, the milk of his cum shooting upward in a marvelous stream of pleasure. The white liquid arched in her direction, and she imagined salty cum spreading over her chest and neck. Her hands rubbed over the curve of her bosom, over the places where his potion would drip down her skin. As she crouched on the hardwood floor and gripped a rod of railing in one hand, the princess felt satisfaction spread throughout her entire being, twisting and curling like wisps of blue energy.

She heard Link breathe a heavy sigh of relief, and the sound jerked Zelda back to reality. The princess slowly removed her hand from the railing, watching down below to make sure Link was still reclining. His gorgeous cock was resting against his belly, the wet shaft still so long and thick. It took every last ounce of her willpower to pull away from the edge as she quietly shuffled back into bed.

The princess spread herself over the sheets, her body still too hot and sweaty to warrant a blanket. She relished the wet feeling between her legs, but she knew something was missing.

As Princess Zelda drifted to sleep, a lingering emptiness haunted her dreams. Blue spirits spiraled through the night sky, dancing in twists and turns, freed from their prison of need and desire. Her dream self watched as the spirits drifted away, flying up into the heavens as she remained standing on solid ground. If only she could feel so free...

Chapter 2

Sunlight poured through the gossamer curtains as she watched dust motes float through the room. Zelda leaned back in the wooden washtub, relaxing her body in a blend of soothing oils and soap bubbles. Her arms rested along the edge of the circle, her long hair draped over the back of the tub as she watched the dawn shift to a true morning glow.

She had woken up so early this morning. The pleasures of last night had achieved the impossible, lulling her into a deep and wondrous sleep. When she rose from her bed and stood before the mirror, she had a pleasant, relaxed smile on her face. It was an expression that did not last, however, for she soon realized that Link had left the house before the crack of dawn.

Perhaps it is for the best, Zelda thought. She did not know how she would react to seeing him again, especially after watching him last night. Would she be able to think about anything besides his chiseled chest, his firm leg muscles, his beautiful, erect cock releasing sweet cum into the air? No, she could not put those wonderful visions out of her mind, at least for the moment. In fact, she was conjuring up the images even as she reached her hand into the washtub, letting her fingers explore the parts of herself submerged underwater.

The princess pressed her back against the wooden slats and held her legs open as best as she could while they remained crossed inside the tub. She knew that she needed more space to satisfy her urges. Zelda lifted her legs out of the bath water, a lather of soap dripping down the curves of her

ankles and calves. She propped her legs over the side of the washtub, pointing her toes toward the ceiling as she returned to rubbing her vagina in fast circles.

She could hear the water dripping from her toes to the hardwood floor below, and the sound only reminded her of his cock, wildly bursting with hot liquid cum. The princess arched her back as her fingers slid into a deeper place, her free hand running over her neck and chest.

The shadow of a cloud passed over the window, and she smiled as she imagined Link's body casting the shadow. She moaned at the thought of him standing over her, rubbing his cock swiftly and vigorously. Perhaps he would even ask for her help. In her mind, the warm, soapy water gliding down her face, her neck, and finally her chest was in fact his hot, glorious potion. She squeezed her left breast as such lustful thoughts poured into her mind, as her body reached the greatest plateau of pleasure she could imagine.

There was a distant tapping noise. Zelda returned from her fantasy, realizing it was the sound of footsteps on the cobblestone path outside.

She swiftly brought her legs down into the washtub, splashing clear water over her chest and her hips as she stood. She pulled her cotton towel off a nearby crate, wiping the excess suds and oil from her body in a blur of motion. Finally, she wrapped the towel over her chest, tucking it over the top of her bosom as she covered her most intimate parts.

As the footsteps grew louder, clearly making their way towards the house, Zelda peeked around the edges of the privacy curtain hanging under the stairwell. This person wore thick hunting boots, and she knew the sound so well. Even though it seemed too early in the day, she realized that Link was on his way home.

She was surprised that the prospect of seeing Link no longer filled her with dread. It filled her with desire. Perhaps the

lustful thoughts from the washtub were still fresh in her mind, or perhaps she had simply grown tired of waiting.

She pulled back the privacy curtain and walked towards the door with confidence. The princess would welcome her loyal knight home, wearing nothing but a cotton towel.

If Link responds well, she thought, perhaps I will even throw aside the towel...

The footsteps were close now. He was nearly home. Zelda swung the door wide open, posing seductively as the towel swished in the breeze, only to flinch violently when she took in the sight of Purah's assistant, Symin, standing before her.

The princess quickly grabbed the door handle and nearly closed it, leaving just enough of a gap for her to see Symin. Her other hand caught the towel before it could fall away completely, but it was obvious that the research assistant had caught a glimpse of her body. Symin's cheeks turned red and he dropped to one knee, turning his gaze away from her as he crossed an arm over his Sheikah robes.

"Forgive the intrusion, your highness!" he cried out. "It is so early in the day. I should have realized that you would be performing your morning rituals, or that you expected..."

"It's perfectly fine, Symin," said Zelda, although the crack in her voice said otherwise. "I wasn't expecting anyone. Just finishing a bath."

The assistant bowed his head even lower. "Lady Purah is right. I am so clumsy. When she finds out how I made a mess of delivering a simple message—"

"Then perhaps this encounter shall be our little secret," she said, cutting Symin off before he could ramble on about his professional life. "You have a message from Purah, yes?"

Symin slowly got to his feet, brushing off his white trousers.

Zelda looked up at him, and she could see that he looked awfully tired. The tone of his skin nearly matched the gray salt and pepper coloring of his neckbeard, and the red sticks in his hair bun were slightly askew. Purah often burned the candle at both ends, relying upon her unnatural youth to see her through a research project, but it appeared that her assistant did not share her level of stamina.

“Lady Purah requests your presence in the tech lab,” he said, regaining a small amount of composure. “She has just received a report of the utmost interest, and she believes a scientific expedition is in order.”

“I understand,” she said. “Would you mind waiting? I’ll just be a moment.”

“Of course, your highness. Please, take all of the time you need.”

Zelda closed the door. She had to be more careful, perhaps even resist the urge to be with Link. Otherwise, she knew it was only a matter of time before she made a complete fool of herself. And so, as she made her way up the stairs and stood on the balcony, she exercised an entirely different side of her imagination.

An expedition? What had Purah learned that would warrant field research? Whatever it was, she was eager to learn all of the details. And perhaps some time away from Hateno Village... away from him would actually do her some good. If Link did not wish to reciprocate her feelings, perhaps she would find a new way to channel her energy.

The princess dried herself off and pulled an outfit from the top drawer. She opted for the look of an adventurer, relying upon the freedom of her fitted pants and a tan shirt, matched with a sturdy, forest green vest. After slipping on her leather boots, she joined Symin on the front lawn and they made their way through the streets of Hateno. Before long, she could see smoke billowing from the ancient furnace. The

door to the ancient tech lab burst open as Purah ran up to her, the little scientist breathless with excitement.

“Goodness me, Symin, how long does it take to deliver a simple message?” asked Purah. Zelda glanced at the research assistant, who was presently rubbing his finger and thumb against his forehead. The princess smiled as Purah took hold of her hands, pulling Zelda along as they returned to her laboratory.

“Of all the coincidences. Of all the blind luck! Normally, it would take years for one of our research projects to get off the ground, but it seems we have been offered a chance to speed things up. Take a look at this letter.”

As Purah scurried off to her desk, Zelda looked around the laboratory and noticed a man leaning against the bookcase. She inhaled sharply, immediately recognizing the weather-beaten cloak, the blue tunic, and the hilt of his powerful sword. Link glanced her way, bowing his head in deference to her position.

Why is he here? she thought, unable to conjure up a single memory of Link visiting the tech lab over the past year. True, he had worked with Purah to restore the Sheikah Slate to full capacity in his quest to defeat Ganon, and the little scientist was quick to offer him advice about advanced weaponry. Did Purah expect for them to encounter such tremendous perils during this expedition?

Her friend jumped down from the desk ladder, a folded scrap of parchment waving about in her hands. “Two of our scouts brought this by at the crack of dawn. Believe me, I was none too happy to hear them knocking at my door that early in the day. A girl needs her beauty sleep, especially at my age.”

Before Zelda could consider the meaning behind this statement, Purah shoved the letter into her hands. “It would seem the people of western Hyrule have beheld a wondrous spectacle over the past few weeks. The folks at Serenne

Stable are practically sick of it, seeing as they live so close to the anomaly. Blue lights dancing in the skies, and the source of the light appears to be the Forgotten Temple itself.”

The princess glanced up from the letter, wearing an incredulous look. “But how is that possible? That temple has lain dormant for a year. Link destroyed all of the corrupted guardians inside, and the shrines have gone dark ever since the fall of Ganon.”

“Ah, but what if I told you that the lights did not belong to guardian or shrine?” said Purah, wagging her eyebrows. “By all accounts, the blue light possesses all of the qualities of luminous stone, and several travelers have claimed that a portion of the temple roof has caved in, revealing a tunnel behind the goddess statue. If the lights are so grand, then this tunnel must contain the greatest trove of luminous stones ever seen in Hyrule!”

Zelda gasped. “It could be the source of energy.”

“Precisely,” said her friend, clapping her hands with delight. “Answers to all of our questions surrounding the stones and the energy beings inside.”

“Purah, we must investigate as soon as possible. I would gladly help you mount an expedition to the Forgotten Temple.”

“A capital idea, your highness, but I’m afraid my little legs will only slow you down, not to mention the people who would question my... condition. I do hope to travel again soon. Perhaps Linky would be good enough to accompany you?”

Zelda pursed her lips together as she looked over at Link, who nodded once in agreement. The thought of traveling with him, spending numerous days on the road, sleeping so close to him during the nights...

“Purah, I doubt Link has the time for such a journey. The people of Hateno have come to rely upon his services. Besides, my goddess powers—”

“—have not been used in over a year,” interrupted Purah, making her point with the jab of a little finger. “Zelda, you are a brilliant scholar, and your scientific insight has been much appreciated. But when was the last time you communed with the ancestors? When was the last time you exercised this power?”

The princess felt the heat rising in her face, embarrassed to admit the truth to Purah. “Honestly, there hasn’t been the need. Ganon has fallen, and our research requires so much of our time and energy.”

“Then it’s settled. You shall be the brilliant scholar that you were born to be, and Link shall serve as your bodyguard, should anything go wrong with your powers,” said Purah, reaching out her tiny hand and placing it over Zelda’s. Her expression turned soft in contrast to her stubborn declarations a moment prior. “Please, your highness. It will help me sleep at night, knowing you are safe, and I do so need my beauty sleep.”

Despite all of her misgivings, in spite of all the warnings that she sensed in her body and soul, Zelda turned to her friend and nodded once in agreement.

Chapter 3

Over the next few days, Zelda worked with the others to gather enough provisions and prepare for the road ahead. She relied upon Link to ready the horses as she went over checklists with Purah, and there were quite a few checklists to cover before the little scientist was satisfied. They discussed ways of mapping the energy patterns, the best method for collecting samples, upgrades to the Sheikah Slate. Purah even gave the princess her personal seal, so their letters would be delivered with the utmost urgency.

“In a perfect world, we would have runners dedicated to the post,” said Purah as she wrapped the seal in a burgundy cloth, “but I suppose we must make due with deliveries between the stables and our scouts. They should treat you like royalty, but this seal will put the fear of the goddess in them. No one messes with Purah’s expeditions, and they know it!”

Zelda chuckled, though she could see that Purah was quite serious. The little scientist climbed up the ladder to her desk, spreading her hands over the most elaborate map of Hyrule that the princess had ever seen. “Now, you should be able to reach the Dueling Peaks before sunset, assuming the weather holds up. If I know Tasseren, he would overcharge his own mother for a soft bed, so you make sure to show him this seal and compliment the auto-feeder I designed for him. He likes to brag about it enough, and that has to be worth a discount.”

As her friend walked the silver points of her compass across the map, it seemed to Zelda that Purah truly was disappointed that she could not join the expedition. She

certainly made a point of reviewing every last step of the journey through her maps, even as she nagged Symin to calibrate the Sheikah Slate just right. Zelda's heart went out to her, but she also felt comforted that her friend was pouring her very heart into these final preparations.

When the day of departure finally arrived, the princess felt a sudden pang of regret to be leaving Hateno behind. She had grown accustomed to the gentle town, with its daily routine and friendly villagers. As they rode their horses through the town gate, Zelda and Link were joined by a gathering of familiar faces. She could see Seldon, the town greeter, waving his big hand as he wished them well. There was Ivey standing with her broom and Prima gathering up the children. Even the town gossips, Nikki and Amira, were there to see them off.

Yes, she would miss the village dearly, but as they continued riding through the woods of Midla, carefully making their way along the cliffs overlooking Fir River, the thrill of adventure began to stir within her. She looked up at the rising stone towers of Quince, giant pillars that had always reminded her of the divine beasts striking their powerful legs into the earth. Even as they traveled through the war-torn lands of Fort Hateno, the princess knew this expedition would be just the thing to reinvigorate her spirit.

When she chanced to look ahead, though, she caught a glimpse of Link riding in his saddle. The sight of his strong torso and firm buttocks resting upon the leather seat was equally invigorating. She shook her head clear of these thoughts, doing her best to focus more on the scenery around her rather than the scenery ahead.

As Purah predicted, they made good time along the road, reaching the eastern side of the Dueling Peaks by late afternoon. After establishing their connections, Tasseren welcomed them with open arms, offering a hefty discount on two soft beds. He pulled Link aside so they could stable the horses together, perhaps showing off the large auto-feeder

that stood next to the horse pens. This gave Zelda some time to stretch her legs in the surrounding fields. As she walked through the grass, curiosity got the better of her. She removed the Sheikah Slate from its satchel to review

Symin's calibrations, flicking her fingers across the surface and moving past the runes to the sensor settings.

"Clever," she said. "These sensors will pick up a trace of luminous stone from at least a mile away. We should locate the source easily once we reach the temple."

She looked up in time to see Link leaving the stable pens, handing off the reins of their horses to the owner. Her loyal knight walked across the field to join her, concern for her well-being written all over his face.

"We still have a few hours before sunset, and Purah left some research notes in the slate. Perhaps we could enjoy the outdoors for a little while?"

Link nodded, patting the hilt of his sword and admitting that he could use the time to practice his technique. Zelda cringed as lustful thoughts accompanied his words, and she walked ahead with her eyes on the slate, trying her best to push away the memory of Link rubbing the hilt of his cock.

They found a rocky outcrop at the edge of Hickaly Woods. She climbed atop a boulder nearby, crossing her legs as she sat upon the mossy carpet. True to her word, she tapped the slate menu to access Purah's research notes on luminous stone. The experiments conducted with her brother Robbie were quite extensive, and the princess was intrigued by the photographs of glowing runes left behind by the energy beings. She did not mention it to Purah at the time, but deciphering Zonai runes had become a bit of a hobby for her over the past year. She was by no means an expert, however, which made this such a perfect mystery for a scholar like herself.

The sounds of physical exertion interrupted her thoughts. Zelda blinked and refocused her eyes on the world around her, which is when she caught sight of Link training in the fields.

She could not take her eyes off of him even if she had tried. His movements were perfect, his body truly magnificent. He twirled the Master Sword through the air with ease, his forearm muscles tight and flexible at the same time. She could not find a better metaphor for his training than that of a dancer, spinning his body in the wind and thrusting his blade into imaginary foes. Sweat glistened on his forehead, and even as a cool breeze rushed over the fields, she felt a droplet of perspiration run down her own face as she watched him wield his blade.

No, I will not be a slave to this fantasy! thought Zelda, gripping the corners of the Sheikah Slate and lowering her eyes. *We must stay focused on the task at hand, and you will only make things awkward with Link. He does not want to explore these feelings, and you should respect his decision. He is a soldier of Hyrule. I am a woman of science and intellect.*

Yet her eyes continued to drift uncontrollably upward, savoring the view of her gorgeous knight. The princess knew she could not ignore her feelings. She may have been a woman of science, but she was also a woman filled with desire.

He was coming towards her now, wiping the sweat from his brow with the back of his hand. His sandy blonde hair was shining in the afternoon sun, and she just couldn't take it anymore. Zelda stood abruptly, leaping down from the mossy boulder and turning towards the forest.

"I... I believe I need some time alone, Link," she said, unable to look him in the eyes as she spoke. "We've been traveling together all morning. Perhaps I will catalog some new entries for the slate and meet you back at the stables before

nightfall?”

Link was initially hesitant to let her wander off on her own, but he did not press her when she claimed to be perfectly adept at taking care of herself. As she walked beneath the trees, she worried that her persistence may have come across as hostility. His only fault was being so very attractive, and now she was the one running away.

Now that she was alone, the princess could ignore those lustful memories that sprang to mind every time she looked at Link. She opened the album files on the slate, discovering that the compendium did indeed need some work. As a budding scientist, she could find herself in need of a particular element or creature. Her work on the album today would enable her to make the most of Symin’s sensor upgrades tomorrow.

And so, as the day wore on, Zelda began exploring the nooks and crannies of Hickaly Woods. She snapped up images of swift violet swaying in the breeze, and she even managed to capture a restless cricket leaping through the air. As the princess made her way up a steep hillside, she noticed a red fox peeking over the tall grass. She knelt down, steadying her hands as she zoomed in on pointed black ears and a white-tipped tail swishing through the grass.

“Hello, sweet darling,” she whispered as she slid her fingers over the slate. “What are you doing out here, all alone?”

Despite the calm that had descended upon the woods, the creature suddenly turned around, the tufts of its ears wiggling about as the fox sensed another presence. It leapt forward, pouncing through the grass as it disappeared over the top of the hill. Zelda sighed, tapping the slate camera off.

“Oh well,” she said. “Some things are far too majestic to be frozen in time, I suppose.”

The princess lifted herself off the ground, realizing that she

could hear a waterfall on the other side of the hill now that the wind had died down. Her stomach started to rumble, which sparked an idea. Perhaps she could capture images of a fish or two, which they could use to find ingredients on the road ahead. *And then I shall return to the stables*, she thought. *Link will start to worry, and we must have a proper meal before we retire.*

When she finally reached the top of the hill, however, her feelings of hunger were immediately forgotten and replaced by a far more delectable sight.

A thin waterfall cascaded down from the cliffs of Angel Peak, feeding into the river before her. Water flowed gently to the west, caressing a shoreline where she could see several articles of clothing strewn about the sand. A sky blue tunic was draped over a rock alongside a pair of tan trousers and royal blue shorts. Leather boots and the sword she knew so well rested nearby, offering every warning sign that the princess should turn away immediately. Even with this knowledge, she could not resist letting her eyes drift up to the man in the waterfall.

Link stepped out from behind the curtain of water, running his hands over his wet hair and closing his eyes against the falling liquid. Zelda drank up the sight of his shoulders and arms. Her pulse raced as she watched him raise both arms over his head, flexing well-toned biceps under smooth, lightly tanned skin. He waded into the river, but the water only reached his knees, giving her a full view of his lovely chest and the entire length of his cock hanging above the water.

The princess lost all sense of time as she watched Link wade through the river. Her world seemed to be trapped in stasis, the only movement belonging to the beautiful man climbing atop a rock that jutted out from the river. A sigh escaped from her lips when Link turned around, the chains of time breaking around her as her body responded to the wonderful sight of his firm, round buttocks above the river mist.

And then he turned his head, staring up at the hill upon which she stood. Their eyes met, and Zelda shuddered when she realized that she was also standing in full view for him.

What have I done? she wondered. *What must he think of me, staring at him like this?*

For a moment, he did not react to her presence in the slightest. He only continued to look at her with the stoic expression of a soldier, his features still as the mountainside. Zelda could not move, positively terrified of what he might do next. But as she stared at him, her eyes wide with apology, a tender smile appeared on Link's face.

The princess could not hide her astonishment as her knight stood before her, wearing this gentle look of satisfaction. Link lowered himself into the river, wading slowly towards the falling curtain of water. She was certain he would hide himself behind the waterfall, but instead, he stopped and glanced back at her. Reaching out, Link cupped handfuls of water and threw it over his naked body.

She gasped as the water splashed over his face, causing Link to throw back his head and toss his hair over his shoulders. Her mouth became dry as the water dripped down his pectorals, his abdominal muscles, and finally over the hardness of his cock. Zelda couldn't recall when the shaft had grown so hard, but now she could see his manhood in all its glory. The shaft glistened in the late afternoon sun, rising over his sandy pubic hair and the curve of his balls.

When she finally noticed that Link was looking back at her, her heart melted at the sight of his tender smile. She could not help smiling in return, but even as hope fluttered inside her, she suddenly realized that the slate was trembling in her hands.

The princess jerked her hands up in surprise, her eyes immediately drawn to the pulsing, yellow light on the surface

of the slate. She opened the sensor and watched as the runes trickled down the screen. Luminous stone.

She looked back at Link, her brow furrowing with indecision. A million emotions were cascading through her, but in the end, the woman of science prevailed. She turned away from the river, following the signal along the foot of the mountain.

As she made her way back through the forest, she winced in agony as the sensor pinged and rumbled in her hands. The sharp sound seemed to bounce off her thoughts, fiercely fighting over her divided attention.

How could you be such a fool? Link deserves your respect, and you gawked at him like he was a piece of meat.

The slate vibrated in her hands.

But he didn't run away this time. He wanted me to watch him, and he was so beautiful. The way his manhood grew... Was he excited to see me there?

The sensor pinged again and again, the sounds getting faster and faster as she forged ahead.

What does that mean? Yes, he did look at me with desire back in Hateno, and... Oh goddess, I do so desire him. But does he actually want to be with me? Can we be more than friends, something more intimate than a princess and her knight?

Zelda felt her palm grow numb when the slate trembled again, violently. She switched off the sensor, certain that the luminous stones must be nearby. In the absence of sharp noises from the slate, though, she soon picked up on another strange sound just ahead. It sounded a bit like livestock, pigs grunting and snorting over one another. She stepped closer, careful to avoid any dried leaves or brittle twigs, and soon the princess identified the source of snorts and grunts.

A trio of bokoblins were gathered in the clearing, stumbling about as they emerged from the mouth of a dark mountain cave. Two of the creatures were pulling a large sack from behind, their red fur glistening with sweat as a blue bokoblin snorted angrily at them.

She peered through the trees and bushes that separated her from these beasts, trying to get a closer look at the sack. As luck would have it, a tear in the leather bag revealed a familiar, glowing blue light. The sensors had picked up on the luminous stones inside, but why were the bokoblins hauling such a heavy load out of the mountain?

A tree groaned behind Zelda, her thoughts interrupted by the sound of numerous twigs breaking at once. She barely managed to turn around when a massive red hand gripped her by the shirt, lifting her over the bushes and tossing her into the clearing. The princess rolled across the dirt, stopping herself with an outstretched hand. The woods were silent for a brief moment, and then a terrible roar echoed through the trees.

She brushed aside a wild strand of hair, looking up to see the bokoblins staring at her in bewilderment. She coughed when the mountain dust drifted into her face, but the rest of her body soon sprang into action. With the bokoblins surprised, Zelda turned onto her back and pointed the slate towards the sky. She swiped the stasis rune just in time, locking the giant red moblin in quantum chains before his fists could strike the ground.

The bokoblins shrieked with laughter, dropping the sack of stones and dancing about her like lunatics. The princess knew their dance would soon lead them to the Boko Clubs lying near the cave, so she pointed the slate at the mountain walls and quickly scanned the area.

“There,” she said under her breath, pressing her thumb hard against the slate, knowing her life depended upon it.

A stream of pulsing energy shot out of the Sheikah tech, smashing into the face of the mountain and grabbing hold of metal deposits within. Zelda jerked the slate backwards, tearing loose a sheet of metal from the crumbling walls. As the bokoblins danced, she swept the slate to the left, striking the blue bokoblin across the head.

The red bokoblins watched dumbly as their comrade slumped to the ground, the bloody piece of metal clattering against the dirt and gravel. Shrieking with rage, they ran towards the cave and grabbed hold of their clubs.

An idea flashed through her mind. She refocused the magnesis energy on the metal sheet, using the upgraded controls to fold and twist the metal into a sharp spike. When she was satisfied with the shape, Zelda lifted the slate over her head and swung it back down, driving the spike into the sack of luminous stones. The spike shattered the black shells of several stones, releasing wisps of aquamarine energy into the air. The wisps ricocheted through the cave and swept around the bokoblins. The terrified creatures screamed and tossed their clubs aside, their red feet scampering away as they fled into the forest.

The princess breathed a sigh of relief, enjoying a warm sensation as the wisps spiraled around her. She smiled in gratitude as the energy beings floated through the air, and then the ground shook under her feet.

As the wisps shot up into the sky, Zelda spun around to face the towering moblin. The beast was struggling against the stasis hold, driving its fist into the ground and glaring at her with hatred. Quantum chains fractured and strained all around its body, and she knew she only had seconds to spare before the moblin broke free of stasis.

The princess closed her eyes. She focused on her breathing, willing her heartbeat to grow calm and her connection with the ancestors to burn bright. She had struck down mightier foes than this one. When she raised her hand, this moblin

would feel the wrath of the goddess.

Nothing. Zelda opened her eyes slowly, expecting a blinding flash of gold as her powers rushed through her. But there was no light, only her arm raised toward the moblin with her palm flat and her fingers spread wide. She felt no connection to the ancestors. She felt nothing.

With a grinding roar, the beast broke through the chains. She tried to aim the slate, but it flew out of her hands as the moblin shoved her to the ground. She heard the slate rattle against the gravel, far out reach. Before she could make a desperate move for her only weapon, the princess felt a sharp pain along the back of her head. Her hands reached up to discover that the moblin was pulling her hair, dragging her across the ground.

No, it must not end like this! Gravel scraped against her shins as she kicked out, but the more she struggled, the more pain she felt. The beast tightened its grip, and Zelda could feel tears welling up in her eyes to accompany the pain. She squinted up at the monster, who licked its lips as it looked down at her with hunger. She screamed in fury, stretching out her hand and willing the goddess powers to rise again.

Oh goddess, why? Why is this happening? Tears were streaming down her face now, and she could feel her energy draining away. The princess sobbed in frustration, cursing her powers as she was dragged towards the mouth of the cave.

As Zelda shut her eyes against the worst, she suddenly felt the pain disappear. She fell flat against the dirt and gravel, feeling only a slight tug on her hair as she tried to pull away. She glanced up, flinching when she recognized the moblin's right hand laying on the ground, severed and resting in a pool of blood.

She could hear shouting outside the cave. The moblin was shrieking in fury, holding the stump of its right arm as a man

shouted in defiance. She watched as Link, clad only in his blue shorts, struck the beast with the Master Sword. His wet body threw droplets about as he spun through the air, slicing the moblin across the neck in a flurry of motion. Blood sprayed from the beast's jugular, causing it to make an awful gurgling noise as it clutched the wound. Her loyal knight backed away from the moblin, maintaining his fighting stance until the monster took two lumbering steps backwards, collapsing against the mountain wall.

Zelda shivered, the adrenaline still pumping through her veins. As she watched Link wipe his blade over a patch of grass, she hugged her arms around her body. She knew that she should feel safe now, rescued from such a terrible fate, but she did not feel safe. She felt helpless, useless... She felt haunted by the ghosts of past failure, and she could not stop the tears from falling down her face.

Link approached her, his calloused feet digging into the gravel as he knelt by her side. As he laid the Master Sword down beside them, she put her arms around him and wept.

"It's happening again. Why, Link? I was in control of my powers, and now..."

She felt his arms encircle her, providing a gentle comfort that stood in stark contrast to his ferocity in battle. Zelda laid her cheek against his bare chest. She smelled the earthy musk of his body, and it was so good. If they had been somewhere else, if she had not nearly...

The princess of Hyrule clenched her fists, a hot torrent of anger moving through her. She gritted her teeth, inwardly defying the fate written for her by the goddess. And when she opened her eyes, she saw the Master Sword resting against the dirt and gravel.

The expression on Zelda's face became as still as the mountainside. Her heartbeat slowed and matched the heart of the soldier who held her in his arms. She banished all of

the doubts in her mind as she kept her eyes steady on the silver sword.

Tomorrow, she would ask Link to train her. Tomorrow, she would learn to wield a blade.

Chapter 4

Red meat and hard vegetables sizzled against iron, droplets of grease and gristle popping angrily as Link tossed the skillet in one hand. Zelda watched the cooking fires burn, the orange and yellow light reflected in her eyes. Her stomach growled impatiently as she listened to the snap and crackle of dinner on the way, and she began to wonder if the stable apprentice had the right idea about raw, gourmet meat.

While she would never admit it, the last two days had been exhausting. After a sleepless night following the moblin attack, they left the Dueling Peaks region early the next morning. She maintained a stoic expression all throughout the following day, using it to convince Link that the expedition must press on. She wore the expression as she rubbed ointment over her scrapes and bruises. She even kept her emotions bottled up as they rode through the ruins of old towns and fortresses, where she could see the broken towers of Hyrule Castle off in the distance.

Now, as she sat beside the cooking fires of the Outskirt Stable, she felt herself losing control. She felt her temper grow hot as the truffle skin turned dark inside the skillet. When Link finished preparing the food and handed her two skewers, she ignored the steam rising off the meal and immediately sank her teeth into it. The rage glittered in her eyes as she tore at the meat, chewing vigorously and swallowing every morsel as quickly as possible.

Before long, she felt conscious of Link staring at her from across the fire, silently holding his skewer as he watched her eat. She slowly chewed the last bite, scowling as she wiped

away a trickle of grease from her chin. *Marvelous work, Zelda,* she thought. *I am sure he finds you quite attractive now.*

As they finished their meal, she refocused her seething rage on the task at hand. She needed to ask him now, not tomorrow or the next day. She needed to ask before the pain devoured her completely.

“Link, I’ve made up my mind,” she said, the firelight still dancing in her eyes. “I want to learn how to use a sword, and I want you to train me.”

Her words certainly grabbed his attention. She could see his body grow tense, and her eyes locked with his as Link paused between bites. He lowered the skewer, opening his mouth ever so slightly. It was obvious that the words were stuck in his throat, however, and he stared back at the princess, speechless.

Zelda flared her nostrils and threw down empty skewers, stabbing them into the ring of fire. Link shifted his body towards her, but the princess ignored him as she stormed away, walking quickly past stabled horses and crates covered in sackcloth.

She heaved a sigh of frustration before sitting down beside a mighty oak tree, hugging her knees to her chest and glaring at the stable torches from across the field. She kicked at a rock with one boot, causing it to roll over the ashes of an old fire and tumble under the skeleton of a ruined wagon. The rage inside her chest was burning low, replaced by twisting knots of failure and disappointment. And now that she actually wanted to cry, the tears would not come.

Fine, she thought, glancing over at the wagon husk. *We’ll be dry and withered together. Perhaps it is the way a scholar should be.*

The princess picked up an orphan twig from beside the oak

tree. She dragged it through the old ashes, drawing some of the Zonai runes that she could recall from her studies. As she pushed the ashes aside in twists and turns, she noticed a large, shaggy man following a small, attractive woman to the crates nearby. The woman rested her lantern on top of the crates, giving the scene a calm and soothing glow.

She became curious as the man sat on the edge of a crate, the woman covering him with a large sheet up to his neck. The woman removed a pair of silver shears from her hip satchel, gently turning the man's chin before moving the shears over his head. With an obvious skill and the speed of experience, the woman clipped away at her customer's shaggy, chestnut-colored mane. In a matter of mere minutes, the man was transformed from an unkempt traveler into a well-groomed fellow with a sensible beard and ponytail.

Zelda watched as the woman handed her customer a mirror and shook out the sheet. The man grinned while admiring his reflection, then he got to his feet and paid her in rupees. The barber continued to shake out the chestnut hair as the man walked back to the stables. As she watched the chestnut hair sail into the wind, the princess touched the long, blonde hair hanging across her back. She winced at the memory of the moblin gripping her hair, dragging her towards a grim fate that she was powerless to prevent.

Before the woman could finish folding the sheet, Zelda was on her feet and halfway across the field. "Excuse me," she said, her voice carrying the confidence of her decision. "May I request your services?"

The woman turned towards Zelda, her expression cheerful under the fur cap that was so common in this region. Her face took on a look of shock, however, when she recognized the princess. She immediately bowed at the hip, two braids of her hair hanging to the ground. "Your highness! Princess!" she said. "My husband told me you were staying with us. Can I get you anything at all? I mean, is there... How may I be of service?"

“It’s quite alright,” said Zelda. “It’s just... I couldn’t help noticing the way you helped that gentleman just now. I would appreciate receiving the same treatment, if you are available.”

The woman looked puzzled at first, and then her eyes widened in surprise. “But... your highness, it is not my place to... And your hair! It is so beautiful. Why would you...?”

The princess gently touched the woman on the shoulder, doing her best to set the barber at ease. She was soon concerned that her touch actually had the opposite effect. The woman shivered as Zelda spoke. “Please, you may call me Zelda. What is your name?”

“Canni, your highness... Princess Zelda. My husband Embry runs the stables. I help out with the horses and tend to our guests as best as I am able.”

Zelda smiled, taking the woman’s hand in her own. “Canni, trust me, I have a very good reason for asking. I would be honored if you would cut my hair.”

Canni swallowed a nervous gulp, quickly nodding as she offered Zelda a seat on the crate. The barber removed another sheet from a nearby chest, and the princess could see by lantern light that this fabric was flawless and white. She sighed, realizing that it would take some effort to convince Canni that Zelda should be treated like any other customer.

However, as the shears clipped away and strands of blonde hair drifted to the ground, Canni soon became relaxed and talkative. She was curious to know what had brought Zelda and her companion so far out into the boonies. The princess tried not to bore her with scientific principles and the study of runes, instead relying upon general statements and her passing interest in the Forgotten Temple.

She was intrigued that Canni had also heard about the blue lights hovering over the temple, mainly from those travelers who were eager to impress the women with tales of wonder. They enjoyed the other's company so much that the barber paused in her work, glancing over at the cooking fires as she spoke to Zelda.

"Forgive me if I'm overstepping any boundaries, princess, but who is the handsome young man that you are traveling with?"

Zelda paused, rolling the question over in her mind as she considered how to answer her. "A soldier. He serves as my protector on the road."

A lock of blonde hair fell across the sheet as Canni continued working, carefully clipping around the long point of Zelda's ear. "I must say, he is quite the looker," said the barber. "He reminds me of Embry when we were younger."

"He is my sworn knight. Nothing more."

"My apologies, princess. I did not mean to offend."

Zelda felt terrible when she heard the apology in Canni's voice. This lovely woman did not deserve such animosity, even from a princess. She had nothing to do with the emptiness that Zelda felt inside her soul. *Although perhaps, she thought, Canni would be willing to share her experience in other ways?*

"Canni, may I ask you a personal question?"

"Of course, princess."

"Before you were married, was there ever a time when your husband didn't know how to show his affections? Was your love ever in doubt?"

"Mm, I see," said Canni, the wisdom of life hidden inside

those three solemn syllables. “To be honest, princess, I was the one who didn’t know how to approach Embry. He was an apprentice at the time, destined to take over this stable when his father passed on, and I was merely a rough n’ tumble horse wrangler. A true rapsallion, mind you, with the wind at my back and the road as my only love.”

Zelda couldn’t help chuckling as Canni made her voice sound as rough as her past life, striking the pose of an adventurer with silver shears in hand. “So, how did you know?” she asked the barber.

“Well, I was moving between so many stables at the time, they all started to look the same. All except one. Every time I visited the Outskirt Stable, I took notice of the tall apprentice with dark and handsome features. And every time I saw him, I lost my nerve. It wasn’t until we were out on the road together, chasing down a mare that had thrown one of his guests from the saddle, that I learned this handsome apprentice had been waiting for the longest time to tell me how he felt.”

“Then he was in love with you, and you never suspected? What did you do?”

“We just laughed and thanked our lucky stars that at least one of us had the nerve. It was my lack of confidence, I suppose, thinking that Embry the stable owner’s son was too far beyond my station. All it took was a little honesty between equals, because in the grand scheme of things that matter, we were just two people in love.”

A warm breeze moved over the field, scattering strands of blonde hair and causing the lantern light to burn bright against wick and oil. Zelda followed the direction of the breeze, catching sight of

Link as he walked her horse around the stable yards. She watched him feed the white steed some carrots as he brushed his other hand across the mane. Canni took out a brush and

ran it through Zelda's hair as she finished her work, but she could still follow the princess's line of sight easily enough.

"Time and honest words change all things. Maybe things will change for the better," she said, untying the sheet around Zelda's neck and sweeping it off her shoulders. "Only, a girl should always be careful. Love making does have its consequences. My little Haite is proof of that. Thank goodness her Grandma Myti helps watch over that little one, or we would never get anything done around these stables!"

Canni laughed, but she soon took on a warm and caring expression as she examined Zelda's banes. "I believe Embry keeps a store of mighty thistle in the back. It's a perfectly normal culinary herb with... other uses. You could start cooking with it, should the time come when it would be useful. It can also give your lover a little extra stamina, if you know what I mean."

Memories of afternoon lessons came to mind. Zelda remembered sitting attentively as Ashai, a stern Gerudo woman, delivered lectures on romance rituals and sex education. She was barely a teenager when Urbosa took her to these lessons, staying close by in case the princess dozed off or became willingly distracted by the sounds of combat training outside.

"I suppose. Yes, that would be much appreciated, Canni," she said. "If I recall correctly, it is a very reliable contraceptive. My godmother wanted me to receive a proper education in... in matters such as this one."

"A wise woman," said Canni, handing her the mirror. "I believe we're finished here. What do you think, princess?"

Zelda gazed at her reflection. She could see that Canni had preserved the braids on top of her head, but the rest of her hair was now resting just above her shoulders. Somehow, the style gave the princess a look that was more determined, swifter than before.

“Canni,” she said, “it’s perfect. Thank you.”

The barber bowed her head and smiled. Zelda removed several rupees from the pockets of her cloak, convincing Canni to accept this payment for a job well done. She then made her way past the stables, past the cooking fires, until she came up beside Link as he guided her horse through the yards. She stood tall, gaining tremendous confidence from her new look even as it clearly surprised him.

“As you can see, I am prepared to undergo a strict training regimen,” she said, striking the heels of her boots together as she had seen so many of her soldiers do in the past. “Nothing will obstruct my line of sight while dueling, and I no longer have to worry about foes dragging me off by the hair. I believe we should start with the proper footwork, unless there is some other reason you are hesitant to teach me.”

When Link nodded and began walking her horse back to the stable, she was uncertain if she had won the argument or not. She paced through the yard, occasionally rubbing her hands over the cooking fire as she waited, but it soon became apparent that she would not have to wait any longer. Her knight rounded the corner of the stables, carrying two wooden practice swords and unraveling the cloth that bound the training weapons together.

He gestured away from the fire, and Zelda followed him further out into the yard. They were standing about four meters away when Link tossed a practice sword her way. Somehow, she was able to catch the twirling sword by the hilt, surprising herself and even coaxing a soft smile from her teacher at the same time.

Their first lesson was now underway. The princess carefully mirrored Link’s movements as he showed her the basic footwork. Her studious eye soon caught on to the nuance and rhythm of his stance, causing her to appreciate the expert control that he had over his own body. As they moved on to

basic attacks and lunges, she began to grasp the logic of swordplay and the many techniques that once seemed like a mystical dance. Still, she did enjoy the notion of dancing with her loyal knight, even if the style of the dance was also a lesson in battle tactics.

Their bodies moved as one, moving around a circle that became tighter as they drew closer to one another. She found herself deep in concentration as she copied his form, but a smattering of voices soon distracted her. Zelda glanced over at the cooking fires, where she could see three people. There was an older woman who she did not recognize, but she appeared to be related to Canni. The princess smiled when she saw a little girl bouncing up and down in Canni's lap, pointing excitedly at the two strangers waving their wooden swords about.

Suddenly, she found her sword arm veering to the right, the movement accompanied by a sharp, cracking sound. She barely managed to keep her hand around the hilt, but her body was now exposed to attack. This was evident by the position of Link's sword, which was frozen in attack position just above her collar. There was a dangerous gleam in his eyes, and as she stared back at him, the princess adopted the serious expression of her knight. Zelda had learned her first lesson.

Link backed away, allowing them to return to a normal dueling stance. She could hear the little girl from across the yard, cheering for the princess even as her mother gently shushed her. Zelda kept her eyes fixed on her opponent as the circle closed once again. Four meters became three, which soon became two, and before she could critically examine her position, she found herself instinctively raising her sword to block the coming attack.

This time, she tightened her grip around the hilt and planted her boots in the grass. Their swords connected in a dull crack. She swung around in response, causing Link's sword to fall back in a perfect deflection.

Three voices cheered for Zelda. She looked over to see Canni and her little girl clapping as they witnessed her first dueling success. And while Link still bore the look of a stoic soldier, the princess felt her heart soar when he bowed his head in approval.



After bidding farewell to their new friends, Zelda and Link set out on the road early the next day. They crossed Manhala Bridge and rounded the hills of Safala by late morning, easily putting the miles behind them on well-rested horses and well-fed stomachs. When the afternoon sun reached its peak, the travelers decided to rest under the trees and columns of Sanidin Park.

As Link set the horses to grazing, she unclasped her satchel and removed the Sheikah Slate from its carrying case. Aside from a few scratches on the handles, the tablet had survived its rough treatment at the hands of the moblin. This was not surprising in the least, especially when Zelda considered how the slate must have been treated during Link's adventures through Hyrule.

She revisited the studies conducted by Purah and her brother, this time paying close attention to the rune syntax left by the energy beings. As she flicked her way through image after image, she felt the outline of an idea taking shape in her mind.

"If the slate can translate images into genetic signals," she whispered to herself, "then surely it would be possible to translate images of runes into another language."

She knew it would not be an easy task, and manipulating the inner workings of a Sheikah Slate required tools that she did not have on her person. Still, Zelda filed away the idea for later experimentation, putting the slate to sleep before she

packed it away.

A shadow passed over the princess. She looked up to see Link standing over her, holding out the hilt of her practice sword. She smiled and gripped the hilt. For some reason, she had more energy today than at any other point over the past week, and she was eager to put it to use.

They climbed the stone stairwells of this ruined park, passing by a circular fountain that still overflowed with mountain spring water, and soon they were standing on a raised platform that curved in a half circle over a mighty peak. There was something vaguely familiar about the giant horse statue, its stone legs rising up to face the lands of Hyrule. When Zelda looked out over the landscape, she soon remembered why it was familiar.

Off in the distance, she could see the ruins of Hyrule Castle as well as the pointed fingers of the Dueling Peaks, but it was the snow caps of Mount Lanayru that haunted her memories. She had stood in this exact spot, her loyal knight standing beside her. Her voice had been filled with dismay as she informed Link of her previous failures, and she clearly did not believe that the Goddess of Wisdom would awaken her powers atop Lanayru.

One hundred years ago, she could not awaken her powers until the kingdom was lost. And now she found herself walking down the same road, unable to commune with the goddess.

She felt Link's hand at her elbow. He gently guided her away from the edge, until they were standing at the base of the horse statue. She held her breath as he moved behind her, wrapping his arms around her body. She could feel his body pressed against her own, the rolling muscles of his chest touching her shoulder blades in a way that made her quiver. Before the princess could deny any of his attempts to comfort her, Zelda felt his hands around her wrist as he raised her sword arm and demonstrated how to properly grip the hilt.

Even though she was wearing her leather gloves, she could feel the excitement building inside her chest as his strong hands covered her own, guiding her fingers as they wrapped around the hilt just below the guard. He moved her left hand into position just above the curve of the pommel, explaining that this lesson would involve environmental attacks and may require the use of both hands. She found herself hoping against hope that Link did not feel her heartbeat quicken, especially when he showed her how to twist her hands around the wooden hilt to further tighten her grip.

When he was satisfied with her grip, Link crossed to the other side of the platform. He placed himself in a readied stance, and Zelda followed suit. There would be no steady circle of assessment in this round. She was ready for action, and Link delivered.

Aside from the occasional break in rhythm, their training swords were locked in a flurry of motion. They quickly moved around the horse statue, Zelda blocking the steady stream of thrusts and lunges as they made their way towards the stairwell. They fought step by step, a man and a woman exchanging ripostes as they matched the other's movements.

As they reached the second tier of this ruined monument, she found herself on the defensive and knew she had to gain the upper hand somehow. Her teacher had encouraged her to use the environment to her advantage, and that was exactly what she intended to do.

Without hesitation, she knocked Link's sword away and lunged for a column behind her. She could sense Link at her heels, but he was not fast enough to stop her wild maneuver. Zelda planted her feet against the column and launched herself off the stone pillar, backflipping over Link as he lunged ahead. She raised her wooden sword over his back, but even as she forced Link against the column, he was still able to spin around and knock the weapon from her hand.

Refusing to admit defeat, she pressed her arm against his chest and held her teacher against the column. Link grinned and shook his head, gesturing towards the wooden sword that was now gently resting against her breasts. He was clearly the victor, but that didn't stop the smile that slowly crept over Zelda's face.

She took a step back and grappled his arm, swinging Link around and causing him to stumble forward. The look on his face was priceless as this noble Knight of Hyrule plunged into the fountain, his wooden sword flying into the air. The princess laughed as he splashed around in bewilderment, and soon, they were both laughing at the absurd way this lesson had ended.

Zelda knelt over the side of the fountain, still giggling as she ran her fingers through the water. "Look at it this way, hero. At least you have a chance to cool down after such vigorous exercise."

Link smirked, and before the princess even realized that she was in danger, he swung his arm through the fountain and sent a wave of water over her.

She yelped as the water drenched her shirt and fitted pants. Zelda had trouble maintaining an affronted look as she reached into the fountain to return fire. Soon enough, the man and the woman were caught up in another fit of laughter, their clothing soaked through and through.



Thoroughly exhausted and soaking wet, Zelda proposed the idea of camping near the ruins for the evening. Link agreed to the plan, quickly building a fire and pitching the tent with her help.

While they waited for the fire to reach peak performance, they each found an area near the ruins where they could shed

their wet clothing and change into something dry. She glanced around the columns, encouraged that Link was standing close by. It soon became clear that these separate locations were merely a pretense, and she felt herself grow warm as Link pulled the tunic off his back and loosened his trousers. He stood completely naked before her, slowly drying his chest off with a towel as he looked directly at the princess.

Zelda could feel the warmth tingling at the tips of her ears as he watched her. *He wants to see me*, she thought, her heart happily skipping a beat as she reached for the laces of her shirt. She slowly parted the corners of fabric, teasing him with a partial view of her chest as she ran a finger over her undergarments and the curve of her breasts. A sultry smile appeared on her lips when she saw his cock rise to the occasion, her slow reveal obviously having an effect on Link.

He deserves a little surprise, she thought, quickly reaching down to her waist and lifting her shirt off in one swift motion. Her tan undergarments vanished with the shirt, causing her breasts to shake about as she exposed them to the open air. There was another priceless expression on Link's face that she would have to store away in her memories, and it only became more priceless as she turned around and slid out of her fitted pants.

The princess placed a hand on her hip, relaxing her body as she posed in the nude. She glanced back to see what kind of effect her naked bottom was having on Link, and now it was her turn to stare in shock and awe.

He's rubbing his cock, she thought, watching her sworn knight move his hand up and down the full length of his manhood. *Oh goddess, do I dare join him?*

When she turned to face him, her eyes savoring the view of his chest rising and falling, the moment of indecision passed over her like the breeze. She lowered herself to the grassy field, reclining over her wet clothes and spreading her legs

wide. Zelda felt the breeze against her naked back as she propped one hand on the ground behind her, feeling so free with her hair cut so short.

This is happening. This is actually happening. Her heart was racing faster than a prize stallion. As she appreciated the size of his manhood from afar, she traced her left hand around the curve of her right breast. Her fingers traveled down her skin, over her hip, and slowly glided through the glistening folds of her labia.

She stroked herself gently at first, but the sight of Link moving his fingers over the head of his penis sent her blood pumping and her hand moving. Zelda could already see a droplet of cum at the tip of his cock, which Link spread over the shaft as he continued to focus on their mutual need. The princess nodded vigorously, hoping that he received the message.

Yes, grip the shaft, just like you showed me. Show me how you wield that mighty blade of yours, Link. Watch me thrust this finger, no, two fingers inside my body. Mm, it tingles so much. I must have perfected my form. Perhaps I didn't tell you, but I tend to be a fast learner. Oh, keep going, you gorgeous man. Yes, keep your eyes on me, and I'll take you where we need to go. Yes, Link. Yes, YES!

A loud moan escaped both of them as his cock trembled in a familiar way, releasing three pulses of white, hot liquid onto the grass. Zelda's toes curled with pleasure, her body shuddering as she spread herself over her clothing. She barely noticed the grass tickling her feet as she leaned over onto her side, slowly opening her eyes. She found Link staring back at her, and they shared a tender smile between them that soon turned to joyous laughter.

The princess swept up her white dress nearby and lowered it over her body, adjusting the top of the dress over her breasts. After lacing up her sandals and gathering up her wet clothes, she strode within a meter of Link, pausing beside his naked

body as she spoke.

“If you would like to finish dressing, hero, I was hoping to cook a well-deserved meal for the two of us. No, I insist. You cooked for us back at the stables, so it’s only fair. Besides, I have a rather special recipe in mind.” She chuckled when Link gave her a rather suspicious look. “Don’t worry, it’s not like I’m going to add any frogs to the pot. It will be delicious, I promise you...”

Her lustful imagination was on full display, clearly evident in the way her eyes drifted down to his thick cock, the way her tongue licked her lower lip with desire. She forced herself to move past his body as he slid into a dry pair of trousers and fastened his boots. After reviewing her ingredients one last time, Zelda pulled the skillet free from their bags. She sat down on a dried log near the cooking fires and set to work on their meal.

It did not take long for supper to come together. She added vegetables and spices to the stir fry, waiting for a small pot of water to boil on the side before she added the rice. When the vegetables were thoroughly cooked, she reached into her travel satchel, crushing a bit of the orange and yellow thistle that Canni had given her.

With the dish properly mixed and a wonderful scent blowing on the breeze, the princess looked up to find Link sitting next to her on the log. Her face grew hot when she realized that he was still shirtless, but this gave her another marvelous idea.

“Here, Link,” she said, spearing a cooked carrot and letting it cool in the breeze. “How about you try a piece before we dive in, just in case you have any doubts?”

She scooted down the length of the fallen tree, removing the slice of carrot and thistle with her finger and thumb. They were beyond any feelings of bashfulness, so she placed the carrot near his mouth and welcomed him to eat from her fingers.

Link smirked knowingly, opening his mouth over the carrot slice. His lips lingered over her fingertips, soft and warm. Zelda felt him move the carrot to the side of his mouth, bringing his tongue back to her fingers and licking around them slowly. She shivered with delight, suddenly aware that they were sitting very close to one another, her naked shoulders leaning against his bare chest.

Time and honest words change all things, she thought, remembering the advice given to her by the women in her life. Even then, she was not sure things should change so quickly. As she felt Link's hand brush against her cheek, the princess inhaled sharply and stood up from the log. "Perhaps I should prepare a couple of bowls for us. I don't know about you, but I am positively famished after practicing."

As she leaned over the cooking pot, she bit her lower lip and glanced back at Link. "Then maybe we should get some rest? I'm sorry, Link, but we still have a long journey ahead of us."

While at first he appeared speechless, Link smiled warmly and agreed with the princess, much to her relief. Once they had finished their meal in a pleasant silence, she watched her beautiful knight pull his tunic back on. Her eyes were filled with longing as he moved away from the camp, tending to their horses and keeping a lookout for monsters as he stood beside the monument. She nearly changed her mind when she saw Link stretching atop the stairwell, pulling his arm muscles taut as he lifted them over his head.

Yet as the sun lowered over the horizon and they prepared for a night of rest, Zelda was not disappointed by the events that had transpired. As a matter of fact, she now found herself looking forward to the road ahead.

Chapter 5

Soft, lush grass brushed against her feet as Zelda raced up the hill. They were all around her now, blue-green souls sailing through the fields and skipping across river water. She could hear their voices, calling her name, raising her spirits as she chased the wisps of energy through the heart of Hyrule.

When she saw the edge of the cliff, the princess felt fear rise in her chest. She fell to the ground, her legs sliding over the grass. She knelt over a vast canyon as the wisps passed over her. Her heart broke as she stared into the night, watching the blue lights fade away and the voices evaporate into the sky. She reached out her arm, her palm flat and her fingers spread wide. There was no magic left inside her, and she could not follow them. Not tonight.

They were gone, but she was not alone. The princess held her breath. She could feel something standing behind her, a presence filled with hatred. It was coming closer. It was breathing down her neck, waiting for her to turn and face the darkness.

Zelda inhaled, filling her lungs as she sat upright on the bedroll. Her eyes took a moment to adjust, still foggy and unfocused from a long night's rest. She recognized the burgundy walls of their tent, brighter now under the morning sun. Her blankets were tangled about her feet, and she could see the patch of grass under her toes that had contributed so vividly to her dreams. She moved herself further up the bedroll, lying down on her side and staring across the tent.

The tension fell away from her when she saw him. There was Link on the other side of the tent, still fast asleep on his back. She let her eyes wander over his body, his arms and bare shoulders resting above the blanket, his legs and torso pulled free from the covers. She sighed when she noticed his manhood rising, pitching another tent beneath his shorts.

It was the smile on his face, though, that made her feel awake and alive. It was slight and so very sweet, turning the corners of his beautiful mouth as he dreamed of pleasant things.

She would have given anything to live inside those dreams now, to kiss the sweet mouth of her sworn knight and tell him how much he meant to her.

Something was coming closer. Zelda turned her head when she heard the noise, a distant clip-clop of horse hooves tapping against the road. She gently pulled away her blankets, doing her best not to wake Link from his pleasant slumber. Her bare feet lightly touched the bedrolls and the grass as she made her way outside, pulling aside the tent flap and shielding her eyes from the sun.

“Easy now girl,” said a familiar voice, and the princess smiled when she recognized the rider now making her way past the trees and columns as she approached the tent.

Canni gently pulled on the reins of her horse, stroking the caramel-spotted neck of the beautiful animal as she whispered comforting words. Zelda walked past the smoldering fire to meet her alongside the road. When the small woman dismounted, she bowed her head to the princess, only to be surprised when Zelda embraced her as a friend.

“It’s so good to see you, Canni. What are you doing out here?”

Canni reached into her saddlebags, and after a moment of rummaging about, she pulled out a piece of parchment sealed with red wax. "A letter arrived for you yesterday evening. The scout who delivered it told us that it came straight from Purah of Hateno Village. We didn't know how long it would take you to reach Tabantha, so I thought it would be better to catch up with you on the road."

She handed Zelda the parchment, and sure enough, the red wax was marked with a copy of the laboratory seal. "That's very kind of you," said the princess, "but you didn't have to go to so much trouble."

"It was my honor, your highness. Remember, I was a horse wrangler in a previous life. It's good for me to revisit this dusty trail every now and then. Besides, we rely on ancient cores from the labs to power some of our modern comforts, and we would never hear the end of it if one of Purah's letters was late."

"True enough. Even still, I do appreciate it."

There was a soft rustling behind them. Turning her head to the side, Zelda could see Link emerging from the tent. He had at least found time to slip into some trousers, but when he stretched his arms away from his bare chest and yawned, Canni lifted one of her eyebrows at the princess.

"So... how are things?" she asked.

There was no way to control the blush rising in her cheeks, but the princess now felt so comfortable in her own skin that she couldn't resist sharing a conspiratorial smile with Canni. "Changing for the better," replied Zelda.

"Glad to hear it," said Canni, winking at the princess. She waved at Link and raised her voice. "Good morning, sir! I hope you slept well."

Link glanced over at the two women, mildly confused. He

greeted Canni with a small wave as he walked up to the cooking fires, removing his dry tunic from the log and pulling it over his head. When Zelda saw him turn to the horses, she put a hand on her friend's arm and gently pulled her aside.

"Canni, in your experience, how long should one cook with the mighty thistle before..."

The woman glanced between the princess and her knight. She leaned in closer to Zelda, the look on her face completely sincere. "Did he nock an arrow for you last night?"

"Canni!"

"Forgive the expression, your highness. You tend to pick them up while working at the stables. But in all seriousness, did you scale the mountain together?"

"No, nothing so bold, although we did share a moment. If we continue along this path, though..."

"Of course, princess. I understand. Well, to answer your question, it does depend on the person. However, I successfully avoided pregnancy during our first two years of marriage, and I never had to take the herb for more than two days, twice a day, before making love with Embry. As you mentioned, mighty thistle is a potent little herb. Perhaps that is one of the reasons it got its name."

Two days. Zelda tried to recall those moments in Hateno Village, watching Purah's silver compass moving across the map. They would not reach Tabantha until tomorrow afternoon, which meant another night with their bedrolls pulled apart. She had no doubt that Link would be a gentleman, as he proved himself to be last night. No, she was concerned that her desires would overwhelm her as she watched him sleep on the other side of the tent, that she would stare at the empty space between them and ultimately make the rash decision to seal the breach with a kiss and a

loving touch.

She felt Canni take hold of her hand, which must have taken a great amount of courage for the woman in spite of their budding friendship. Zelda was glad she took the risk. “Princess, there are other ways to show your affection, even physically. You do not have to completely bind yourself to a lover to achieve satisfaction.”

“You mean, by looking at one another from afar?”

“There is that,” said the woman, a hint of knowledge shining in her eyes, “though I was referring to something a bit bolder. The act of making love is truly wondrous, but there is a lot to be said for simply touching your partner before you do the deed, or even in place of climbing to the summit. Sometimes, you just want to admire the landscape and touch the majesty of the mountain, if you follow me.”

Her words painted a vivid picture in Zelda’s mind. The princess could feel her breathing become shallow as she glanced at Link, watching him stroke their horses as she conjured up the notion of his calloused hand stroking her in so many ways.

“Thank you, Canni. I will... consider it.”

“Of course, princess. Safe travels to you both. And please don’t forget: honest words can go a long way.” They embraced one last time before Canni mounted her steed, coaxing the horse back to the southern road. The woman looked over at Link as he returned to camp, giving the princess a wink and a smile. “A very long way.”

Zelda shook her head even as she smiled with joy, watching the woman travel past the ruined monument and vanish beyond the hills to the south. As Link packed their belongings and dismantled their tent, she broke the red seal on the parchment in hand.

She unfolded the letter twice to reveal Purah's quick handwriting, the Hylian characters leaning forward and carrying the same unrestrained energy as the little scientist.

Dearest Zelda,

I do hope this letter reaches you before you enter Tanagar Canyon. After you left the village, I made certain to send word of the expedition to the western laboratories. Their lab assistants should have an access point to the Forgotten Temple well underway, which would allow you to investigate this new tunnel with a pack animal and provisions, if needed.

The people at Tabantha Bridge often care for the oxen who wander about that region, and one of those beasties would be perfect for an underground survey. If the assistants are doing their job correctly, the scaffolding should support the weight of an angry Lynel much less a pack animal. Alas, good help is so hard to find these days, so you may want to give them some time to get things set up right.

Please send word of your progress when you reach Tabantha. I wish I could be with you when you see the lights dancing in the sky.

Your faithful servant and partner in science, Purah

P.S. Do tell Linky that I said hello. I trust he has been a good travel companion?

“More than you know, sweet Purah,” said Zelda, kissing her fingertips and touching the lines of urgent text. “Until our next meeting.”



Satori Mountain was rising in the west, a constant companion as they made their way through the rocky terrain of Hyrule Ridge. Despite her friend's advice, Zelda continued to feel anxious when she found herself riding so close to Link or when she helped him unpack their tent the following evening. As they enjoyed a supper of mushrooms and thistle, however, she realized the normal activities of their day had successfully distracted them from any further encounters. And after a fairly grueling training session, they were both entirely too sore to entertain the notion of further exercise.

When she could hear Link snoring lightly on the other side of the tent, she quietly removed the Sheikah Slate from her satchel. She held the slate over her as she rested on her back, grateful for the warm blankets and the bedroll underneath her as she listened to the harsh wind blowing outside their tent.

She swiped her fingers across the screen, the ideas and notions rolling around her mind. *We did add lexicons to the slate memory this year. Gerudo and Zora runes are fully mapped, and it seems Purah has charted some of the Zonai language. If I could program the sensors to map images to the existing lexicon, then perhaps...*

Zelda felt exhaustion welling up inside her, manifesting itself as a tremendous yawn. As she swiped the lexicons away and sent the tablet to sleep, the princess soon followed suit and fell into a deep, surprisingly dreamless slumber.

The next morning, their road turned west past the Seres Scablands. She marveled at the strange and wondrous Dragon Blood trees that filled the scene, their flat, circular treetops making it seem like a horde of floating islands were filling up the sky. By early afternoon, they could see the windmills of Tanagar Canyon and the bustling stables of Tabantha Bridge.

Zelda was surprised by the sheer amount of people gathered in the stable yards. There seemed to be a new person

crossing the bridge every few minutes, and she even noticed a blue-feathered Rito flying out of the northwest and descending upon the rooftops. When they finally made their way into the common room, rubbing elbows with dusty travelers and a band of Gerudo warriors, they were eventually greeted by an aging stable owner who still moved about his business with the spryness of youth.

The owner, who was named Dabi, explained that he was handling a dozen requests at any given time due to the popularity of travel in these days of peace. A handful of people were actually pilgrims who sought an audience with the great fairies, but there were so many others who simply wished to see the world now that it had woken up from the nightmare of Calamity.

As Dabi spoke, Zelda glanced around the common area and noticed the many guests gathered around their beds. While the stable owner was frantic to secure accommodations for the princess of Hyrule, she soon put his mind at ease and assured Dabi that they would be far more comfortable camping outside. She could not help sharing a knowing smile with Link as she spoke, and she delighted in the sight of this brave warrior turning slightly red in the cheeks as he smiled in return.

The princess and her knight soon found themselves engaged in conversation and trade with the pilgrims and workers of Tabantha. Zelda could not believe her luck when she happened upon the tools needed to upgrade the slate. She thanked the cheerful man with the many wares on his back, paying him handsomely for these unexpected treasures. Her good fortune did not end there, however, as she soon came across a stable hand who was guiding a big, blue ox towards an open stall. When she learned that the ox was found wandering through the hills of Illumeni, she offered a handsome sum for the animal, which the man happily accepted.

She was gently running her hand over the creature's head

when Link found her, a new quiver of arrows slung over his shoulder. He gave the princess a comical double take when she introduced their new travel companion, stroking the soft ears of the blue ox as she relayed the details of Purah's letter.

"Besides, he's such a sweetheart," she said, cooing softly to relax the beast. "It appears we were destined to meet. This fellow was once a native of the Illumeni Plateau, the next step of our journey. It will be like coming home for him. Link, perhaps we shouldn't wait? It is still early in the day, and we could make great headway to the canyon pass if we camp in the hills tonight."

She walked over to her knight, placing her hand on his chest and whispering into his ear. "It won't be so crowded, either. We would be all alone, under the warm blankets..."

Her cheek brushed against the side of his face, and a wild spirit moved within her. Before she could reconsider her actions, Zelda lightly licked the point of Link's ear. She could feel his body tremble against her own, and the princess chuckled when her beautiful bodyguard quickly agreed to this change of plans.



While it took some time to track down the busy stable owner, they soon struck a deal with Dabi to stable their horses until their return. Zelda knew it would be much easier to make their way down the canyon pass with only one animal, and the big, blue ox did such a fine job holding their provisions that she had no concerns about the last leg of their journey.

With the sun sinking into the western sky, they rounded the southern hills and made their way through the Illumeni fields. The hills and plateaus swept up on either side of them, soon dropping off on the right as they walked alongside the cliffs of the canyon. Once they had traveled a few miles southwest, Link decided it would be best to find a campsite

before nightfall. Although she suspected that he wanted to stop early for other reasons, the princess could not deny that dusk was approaching and the rocky landscape would provide a safe place to rest. *And besides, she thought, it has been two days since we left the park. It would be nice to stay here, while we both still have energy to spare...*

Link set to work on building a makeshift shelter for the ox, using ropes and old pieces of wood from a derelict cabin in the woods. He insisted that Zelda get some rest as he worked on the shelter, and so she found a quiet spot near the trees to focus on the slate.

The princess laid out her new tools on a slab of granite, carefully turning the slate over and prying open the back cover with the flat end of her wrench. While she had set the device to sleep mode, she knew she had to be cautious while picking and prying at the circuits. This was a piece of technology that could freeze water and lift metal into the air, after all. Even as she planned to change the inherent abilities of the slate, she also understood that the exposed device deserved the utmost care and respect.

When she was satisfied with her work under the cover, the princess focused her energy on the slate interface as she reprogrammed the sensors. “Designs can always be worked around, or at least I hope.”

She continued to tinker away at the code as the shadows of trees moved about her and the pink glow of sunset shimmered through the leaves. When Zelda was just about ready to pack up her tools and continue her experiments some other day, she suddenly discovered the proper syntax to connect the lexicon data with the sensor array.

“Was that it?” she asked herself, her heart flutter with hope. “It must be! Still, there’s only one way to be sure...”

The princess jumped to her feet with slate in hand, pacing between the trees and turning about until she found a patch

of dry dirt. She grabbed one of the sharper tools and knelt on the ground, cutting the shape of runes into the dirt. When she had inscribed several Zonai runes, using a familiar phrase from her studies, she stepped away from the patch of earth and aimed the slate over the runes.

“Moment of truth,” she whispered, waiting for the camera to communicate with her new program.

The camera focused on the runes, and before she knew it, blue letters were flowing down the screen to form a message. At first, the runes were merely replicated at the bottom, but these runes were soon replaced by a Hylian translation of her favorite Zonai phrase: *Our destiny does not belong to the stars. It belongs within ourselves.*

“It works,” she said, her hands frozen on the slate handles in minor disbelief. “It actually works!”

Her eyes flicked upward to see Link striding across the field, most likely checking up on her before the twilight of dusk approached. She ran over to him and grabbed his hand, repeating the process of capturing and translating the Zonai runes.

“Did you see it, Link?” cried Zelda, pressing closer to him as she held up the slate. “Now we’ll be able to read the messages they left behind, as quickly as possible. This will make it so much easier to uncover their meaning, perhaps pinpointing the origin of the wisps themselves. Oh, Link, isn’t that wonderful?”

There was so much joy building up inside her that she just had to express it. She leapt up, wrapping her arms around his shoulders and pressing her lips against his own. She shut her eyes as so many wonderful feelings passed over her, the elation of discovery soon eclipsed by the thrill of kissing Link for the very first time.

When she finally pulled away, she found Link frozen in

bewilderment. She had never seen his eyes so wide before. It was such a marvelous sight, and Zelda could not stop laughing as she grabbed his hands and pulled him about. They were soon spinning in place, caught up in an impromptu dance of celebration that would have made Purah proud. And before they could do anything to stop it, one or both of them had tripped over their own feet.

Zelda felt herself rolling down the hill, wrapped safely in his arms all the way down. When they finally came to a stop, she found herself on top of Link, staring into his gorgeous blue eyes. It was now that she felt her own body frozen in time, realizing that she would run for miles to bathe in this color of blue. It was such a tender moment, one that could be broken with the faintest of sounds or the slightest of movements. This time, she was cautious as she leaned in, kissing Link softly with precision and care.

The gentle contact of their lips soon turned to wild exploration, their mouths opening to let their tongues glide against one another. It was like a jolt of electricity had struck their senses, causing Link to turn Zelda over in a fierce embrace and leading to one last turn as she rolled back onto him. She pulled her mouth away from his, not because she wanted to stop exploring those smooth lips or his curious tongue, but because she had something far more interesting in mind.

The princess sat upright over her sworn knight, straddling him across the middle and moving her body until she could feel the glorious hardness of his cock. Even through his trousers, she could feel the long shaft pressed against her labia, locked between the lower folds of her body in a way that made the whole world disappear. There was only a woman resting over her man, rocking her lower body back and forth over his marvelous member.

Her heart soared when she felt his hands running over her thighs, gripping them with such fervor and lust that she knew he appreciated her voluptuous figure. She bit her lower

lip and beamed with pleasure as his hands continued their journey, traveling up her thighs and now gripping the sides of her bottom. She exhaled sharply when she felt his left hand stroking her, suddenly slapping her across the left buttock.

The kingdom would have been aghast to see the sensual smile that appeared on her face, even more so to see her tongue sliding over her lips in anticipation. "My, aren't you bold?" she said, reaching behind her to take hold of Link's hands. "Then you might as well finish what you started, hero, before I punish you for such insolence."

With a speed that surprised even herself, she pulled his hands upward and held them against her breasts. Despite the fabric of her shirt separating his hands from full contact, she shivered as his fingers grasped each boob. They both gasped in delight, and Zelda kept riding over his thick manhood as Link fondled her chest.

The emotions were too much to handle. She had to lean in for another kiss. She had to run her fingers through his sandy blonde hair as her tongue glided over his neck. As the princess gently bit the sweaty, delicious skin of her knight's strong neck, she felt his hand move up her shirt. She did not care in the least. In fact, she knew this was just what she needed, to feel the touch of his calloused hands on her naked skin, to shudder in ecstasy as he slid his hands beneath her undergarments and gently pinched her nipples between his fingertips.

The sensation caused a deep moan to issue from her body, motivating her to sit upright and reach back to his trousers. There was no shyness left in her, no hesitation as she pressed the palm of her hand over his manhood, her fingers stroking the impression of his balls and feeling him grow harder and harder beneath her vagina.

She couldn't wait any longer. It had been two days, and she could sense the trembling need in both of their bodies. "I

want you,” she whispered, the logic of the scholar now giving way to the needs of the moment, the needs of the woman who adored this man.

When she reached her hand into his trousers, however, she soon realized that the ground itself was trembling. She looked up into the sky, where she could see dark storm clouds forming in the south. The sound of thunder rumbled through the hills once again, giving the two lovers pause as they both caught the scent of rain in the air.

“I suppose we should finish setting up camp,” she said, still trying to catch her breath from all of the excitement. “It wouldn’t be very pleasant if we were struck by lightning before going any further.”

Link chuckled as they both climbed to their feet, helping her gather up the tools as Zelda tucked the slate into its carrying case. They began walking towards the Illumeni Plateau, where she could see the blue ox grazing next to a grouping of boulders and a small lean-to crafted by Link.

As they made their way across the field, the princess took a deep breath of mountain air to calm her senses. When she happened to look north, she noticed a hint of color in the pale twilight. She watched the colors swirl about, clothing the night sky in deep shades of blue, and then she realized what she was seeing. Luminous stones were glowing off in the distance, shining their light high above the temple rooftop. It was a sight that she knew awaited her at the end of their journey, yet she could not help feeling unprepared for this mystical beauty dancing in the north.

A flash of lightning coursed through the sky, soon followed by another boom of thunder. The princess turned her head towards the south, where she could see the clouds rolling over the Cliffs of Ruvara. A heavy mist was crawling through the hills, but even through the mist, she could see something standing on the edge of the cliffs.

The figure was shrouded in darkness and too far away to make out. Even as she stared at this shadowy presence, though, she somehow knew that it was watching them. Before she could call out to Link, the creature moved away from the edge, vanishing into the mist.

She shook her head, uncertain if she had seen anything at all as the clouds covered the hills in darkness. As she followed Link to their campsite at the foot of the plateau, Zelda turned her attention back to the blue lights of the north, only to discover that the luminous glow had faded away as the storm clouds gathered overhead.

Chapter 6

A light rain tapped on the shelter above, adding a natural rhythm to the sound of Zelda's lullaby. She knelt beside the ox, softly humming the tune as she rested her hand on its shoulder. The princess was not sure if the lullaby would soothe the beast's tempers, but it had always given her a sense of peace when her mother sang the melody so long ago.

She smiled when the large creature snorted, shaking its ears about and laying its body down on a mound of dirt and hay. In spite of the rain and the sound of distant thunder, the ox now appeared to be somewhat comfortable, secure between the boulders on either side and the planks of wood overhead. And so she continued humming for this gentle beast, watching the animal's eyelids rise and fall with the notes of her tune.

When she could feel the ox snoring beneath her hand, Zelda turned her attention to the outdoors. The tempo of the storm was increasing, and it was time for her to return to the camp. She draped a woolen blanket over the animal, patting its shoulder gently before making her way down the hillside.

The princess wrapped her midnight blue cloak about her, pulling up the hood to ward off the lightly falling rain. From across the field, she could see an electric lantern glowing inside their tent, the warm amber light radiating from an ancient core. She also noticed his shadow, moving across the walls of the tent as he unrolled their sleeping gear.

She paused on the hillside. The rain slid down the corners of her cloak as she watched his silhouette from afar. Soon, her

shadow would also be cast against the tent, moving closer to him until they merged as one. She imagined the dark outline of their bodies intertwining, the warm light shining around her naked legs as she wrapped them about his muscular back, his thighs, the entirety of his firm and magnificent body.

Are you ready, Zelda? she asked herself, feeling herself grow warm in spite of the wind and the rain. *Are you truly ready to share yourself, body and soul?*

Light poured from the tent as Link stepped outside. He stood there, tall and handsome, and when their eyes met from across the field, all of the lingering doubts in her mind vanished without a trace. She knew in that moment that there was no one else in all of Hyrule who she wanted to love, whose body she wanted to explore in the finest detail. *Yes. I need to feel his arms around me, his skin touching mine. We've waited more than a hundred years to be honest with one another. We won't wait another night.*

Zelda waved her arm, signalling to Link in the failing light that she was drawing near. She took several long strides toward the camp, feeling warmer with every step. In the midst of all the warmth and desire, though, she suddenly felt a chill running down her spine. It was like ice spreading throughout her body, freezing her muscles to stillness as she halted midstride. Beyond the sound of rain, there was only silence, and then the sounds of scraping and growling filled the void.

The princess held her breath. Something was standing behind her, and it was coming closer. When she felt this presence bearing down on her, Zelda heard Link shout her name from across the field.

She shook away the feeling of ice, forcing her body into a dive. As she rolled to the left, she caught sight of a savage sword swinging over her. The sword was wielded by an immense shadow with pale, yellow eyes. The eyes glared at

her with such intense hatred, and she knew this creature wanted nothing more than to take her life.

Holding out her hands, Zelda was able to clutch at the grass and dirt, stopping herself from sliding down the hill towards the canyon below. She threw back her hood, focusing on the far side of the field as the creature galloped onward. A wild mane of white hair trailed behind its head, swiping to the side as the monster turned about and angled its massive body. It stamped its hooves into the ground while changing course, swinging around the foot of the hill to make another pass at her position.

A Lynel. Now that she was facing the creature, even from this distance, she could see the distinct physique of the monster. There was no mistaking this terrifying combination of a giant horse body and the deformed torso of a man. She could see a necklace of minerals and skulls around the creature's neck, the bones glistening white as they rattled against its chest. And even though she could barely make out its face from this distance, she knew the snarling muzzle and lion fangs were often the last things that a victim would ever see. She feared it would be her final view of life as she stood on the hill, weaponless and powerless to prevent her fate.

The savage sword whipped through the air, and she felt herself fall back against the ground as the beast tore across the field. She could feel Link on top of her, covering her with his body and wrapping his arms around her. They locked eyes only for a moment. When they heard the beast howling in rage behind them, Link rolled away and grabbed at Zelda's hand, pulling her along as they sprinted towards a rocky outcropping nearby.

They dove behind the rocks, listening to the Lynel stamp its hooves and beat its fists into the ground. Link's movements were sharp and quick. He unclipped the bow from his back, knocking an arrow from his quiver as he spoke. She barely registered his warnings to stay out of view, her eyes drawn to the arrowhead as it snapped open and unleashed sparks of

electricity. Zelda grabbed his arm.

“Link!” It was all she could manage to say. Instead, her eyes spoke for her, pleading with him to stay behind, to stay safe, to slay this beast and come back to her alive. The memory of another night flashed through her mind, a night of rain and deadly nightmares that surrounded the princess and her knight. She blocked out the nightmares. She couldn’t bear the thought of once again holding Link in her arms and feeling his life drain away.

As he looked back at Zelda, Link reached behind his back and drew the Master Sword, laying it on the grass beside her. The message was clear. If he could not fulfill her wishes, she would at least have some way to defend herself.

He was gone before she could say another word.

She looked on as the man she loved walked down that hill, his fingers brushing against the fletching as he held the arrow steady and the bow below his waist. She could see the massive shadow of the Lynel standing next to the cliff, its white mane lit up as a bolt of lightning struck the horizon. A gust of wind blew across the field, man and beast glaring at one another through the steady, falling rain.

The beast struck first, slamming a fist against the ground as it broke into a gallop. The blue stones and skulls shook against the Lynel’s chest, as if to show off space that still remained for trophies yet to come. Zelda drew a deep breath as the beast swung its sword, narrowly missing Link as his body spun through the air. Without missing a beat, Link drew back the arrow as he flipped through the air, releasing a shot when his boots struck the earth. The Lynel roared and drew up on its back legs, convulsing as the electricity coursed through its body. It reached around and ripped the crackling arrowhead out of its shoulder, cold air huffing from its nostrils as it glowered at Link.

Zelda stood beside the boulder, her hands gripping the edges

of rock as she watched the battle. Her heart felt like it was being crushed inside her chest as the monster whipped its sword through the air, leaping down the hill as Link dropped to one knee and aimed the bow. And then all at once, the weight was lifted as she watched him release a second arrow, this time striking the beast right between the eyes.

Even as sparks flew off the arrow, it seemed the beast had become calm for the first time in its life. Its shoulders slumped, the savage sword falling from its hand and tumbling down the hill. Link moved around the beast, nocking another arrow just to be safe. As her knight carefully backed away, though, his body soon became relaxed when the Lynel tipped over, its legs stiff as wooden branches.

While she still kept her eyes locked on the beast, Zelda breathed easier as the scene grew quiet. Her hands loosened their grip on the boulder, and she smiled as Link made his way up the hill. He had lowered his bow, placing the arrow back in its quiver. The nightmare appeared to be over, sparing them the heartache of past failures.

A shiver of movement caught her attention. Her eyes grew wide as one of those stiff horse legs started to bend. A single hoof pushed against the mud, followed by the others as the monster sucked in a breath of air. The Lynel turned towards Link, and even as Zelda shouted her warning into the wind, the beast reached out for the necklace and grasped a handful of the blue minerals between the skulls.

She watched in horror as the Lynel crushed the luminous stones in its fierce grip, blue wisps of energy emerging from the black rock dust and drifting upward. But there was no escape for the wisps, who were quickly devoured by the beast. The Lynel drew a deep breath as the wisps moved up, inhaling their energy through its muzzle and nostrils. Zelda gasped as the beast broke off the arrow that stuck out from its head, blood flaking away from the wound as the skull fused and the skin grew back. The Lynel leaned forward and dug its fingers into the mud, those once-yellow eyes now

trailing a ghostly afterburn of blue-green light.

“Link, behind you!” she screamed, throwing her body forward as the Lynel charged up the hill. Link wheeled about, bow in hand, and reached for the quiver.

It all proved to be too little, too late. As he drew back the bow, one of Link’s boots slipped on the wet grass and the arrow shot wide, sailing off into the canyon. The Lynel charged ahead, swinging an arm out and tossing her knight into the air. Link flew up the hill, landing near the boulders, his bow snapping under the weight of his body. He was far from broken himself, still able to push off the ground as he prepared to take a stand, but Zelda knew the beast would be upon him long before he was ready.

There was no other choice, no time left to consider her actions. She ran behind the rocks and reached down to the ground, gripping the Master Sword around the dark blue hilt. Thunder and hoofbeats shook the landscape as she planted her boots on a small boulder. She vaulted over the rocky steps as the Lynel galloped onward, raising the sword with both hands and launching herself off the highest boulder.

Zelda shouted at the top of her lungs as she brought the sword down on the Lynel, and when the sword connected, a brilliant light flooded the hillside in gold.

She somersaulted to the ground, the goddess power pulsing through her fingers even as she continued to grasp the sword. The princess steadied herself in the midst of this blinding light, but she could still hear the monster bellowing in anger. When the light started to fade, she looked up to see the beast clutching its chest where the sword had struck, a nasty red gash running across its sternum. It fixed those blue-green eyes on the princess before baring its fangs, spittle flying from the beast’s muzzle as the Lynel roared its challenge in her direction.

Moving to attack position, Zelda drew back the Master Sword and lunged at the Lynel, thrusting the blade into the monster's rib cage. Her powers radiated from the blade, as if the spirit of the sword was acting as a conduit of goddess energy. The energy exploded out from the blade, knocking the beast back down the hill.

When she looked about, she realized her body was bathed in goddess energy, her arms glowing with golden fire and her short hair standing on end. She could feel the power coursing through her veins, and it felt good.

Her head snapped up, her attention focused on the movements of her foe. Stooped over, the Lynel was reaching down for the large, silver sword that rested near the edge. She would not let it succeed. With only a thought, Zelda shot down the hill in a blinding flash. Before the beast could grasp its weapon, she swung the Master Sword in a wide arc. The blade connected with the Lynel, resulting in a crash of thunder and a flash of golden light. Her blow threw the beast off the cliff, its body breaking in the canyon below and releasing blue wisps into the air.

The princess stood over the cliffs for a long moment, the golden light slowly fading away as the rain trickled through her hair. Zelda fought to control her breathing. The righteous anger threatened to overcome her, flooding her mind with violent thoughts and the need to strike down servants of the Calamity. It was her destiny, the overriding quest of her life, right up until she felt a hand gently touching her shoulder.

She spun around, and her burning eyes locked on this new presence. All of the anger left her when she saw Link, staring at her with the utmost awe and respect. She drew a deep breath, willing the goddess energy to be at peace within her. Even as the golden flames receded from her aura, an entirely different sort of energy took hold of the princess.

She reached out and wrapped her arm around his waist, pulling Link against her body as she held the Master Sword

behind her. Their mouths connected, the princess of destiny and her sworn knight united in a deep, passionate kiss as lightning struck the horizon and blue wisps shot into the sky. Yet Zelda knew they were far beyond destiny, far beyond these stations in life that once held them apart.

As his hands pressed against the small of her back, she knew he was so much more than a loyal servant. As she grasped the side of his waist, she finally understood that she was the goddess of her own destiny, her powers flowing from a confident woman with plans of her own.

And as for the man in her arms, she had such wonderful plans for the night ahead.



Storm winds shook the walls of the tent. Rain trickled down the burgundy cloth, casting shadow lines of pulsating life across the bedrolls and blankets. Zelda could feel the wild energy pumping through her veins as she pulled Link through the opening, her hands grasping his tunic as they shared kiss after kiss.

She wrapped her fingers around his belt. “We should really get out of these wet clothes,” she said, her breathing rapid and urgent. “Don’t worry. I’ll do my best to keep you warm.”

As she spoke, her fingers slipped into his belt buckle, unfastening the leather straps with one resolute motion. She let the belt fall away as she lifted the corners of his tunic, revealing his wet and glistening chest muscles in the amber light. Link finished pulling the tunic over his head and tossed it into the corner, turning his attention to the laces of her shirt.

They pressed together as soon as her shirt fell aside, Zelda reveling in the glorious touch of his muscles against her naked skin. She leaned over and kissed his pectorals,

running her tongue over his left nipple as Link reached around and unfastened her undergarment.

Good, she thought. I need to feel closer to him. When her undergarment dropped to the ground, she moved against Link, her soft breasts pressing up against his chest as the lovers fell into the heap of blankets behind them.

Oh goddess, he feels so good, and his heart is beating so fast. Yes, Link, touch them. Touch my breasts. Slide your fingers around my nipples. Yes, just like that. It will give me plenty of time to stroke your arms, your chest, the lines of muscle leading down beneath your trousers. Perhaps we should pick up where we left off this afternoon. I'll just unbutton the front, like so, and reach inside...

Zelda gasped in delight as her hand wrapped around his erection. His cock was so warm and silky smooth, so full of life. She pulled back the corners of his trousers, releasing the full length of him into the open air. Her eyes grew wide as she drank up the sight of his long shaft. Her hands moved on instinct, grasping the base of his hard cock and letting her fingers run through the wiry pubic hair below.

“Mm, it feels so good, my love,” she said, letting her fingers slip down around his balls. “You have no idea how much I wanted to do this, how much I wanted to help you when we were watching one another.”

She loved the sound he was making, the deep moan of satisfaction as her fingers traced the wonders of his manhood. His moan soon transformed into a passionate growl, and Zelda felt her senses spike with excitement as Link turned her over on the bedroll.

She sighed as he unbuttoned her fitted pants, his hands pressed against her waist as he pulled the pants and her undergarments down over her legs. She curled her legs up as the fabric slid off her feet, and then she returned the favor by gripping the back of his trousers before she pulled them

down. Her body shivered as she ran her hands over his firm buttocks, her arms prickling with goosebumps as she touched his strong thighs on the way down.

Zelda folded his trousers and tossed them away from the bedroll. When she turned back to Link, they were completely exposed to one another. She looked down to see his hand wrapped around the shaft of his penis, ready to stroke himself as he watched her. The princess crawled towards him, gently moving his fingers away from his cock and replacing them with her own.

“You don’t have to do it alone, my love, at least not tonight,” she said, her mouth opening slightly as she stared into his eyes. “Sometimes, you must breathe, relax, and enjoy yourself a bit. And tonight, I want to enjoy touching your body. You’re welcome to touch mine, if you’d like.”

She knelt on the bedroll as she stroked his cock, spreading her legs out and leaving a perfect triangle between herself and the blankets. Realization dawned upon Link, and so he reached out to rest the palm of his hand on her vagina.

A shock of pleasure ran through her, the motion of her upright body suspended as his hand covered her labia and the soft fuzz of her pubic hair. His touch was warm, and she was surprised by how content she was now, just feeling his hand touch her so intimately. It was calming and stimulating at the same time.

“Oh Link,” she whispered, lost in the sensations of his touch. “I want you to make love to me. I want you inside me.”

She could see concern overtake his features, and Zelda knew he was worried about the consequences. It was comforting to know that her lover was mindful of such things, but before he could raise any objections, she placed a finger over his lips.

“I have a little confession to make. When I was cooking our meals, I wasn’t just using the mighty thistle to assist with our

training sessions. The herb can be used for other things, and it will allow us to make love without conceiving. It's always good to plan ahead, don't you agree?"

There was no doubt in her mind that he agreed with her, no doubt whatsoever as Link wrapped his arms around Zelda and they fell back against the blankets. She could feel his cock and his balls pressed against the side of her leg, and the feeling was marvelous. It was enough to make her wet, and as Link reached down to rub her in small, gentle circles, the princess was elated to discover that he had carefully studied the way that she had stroked herself back in the park. He had studied her movements very closely indeed.

She held his cock, sliding her fingers over the tip and rubbing the first droplets of cum down the long shaft. "Yes, Link, you're doing so well. Don't stop. Perhaps you could give me some advice on my technique. Am I gripping the hilt correctly?"

His groan of pleasure was all the answer she needed. Zelda giggled as she continued to move her hand up and down his cock, moaning every now and then as his fingers explored her glistening folds. Now she could feel his wet erection rubbing against her hip, and she could not wait any longer. She took hold of his shoulders, pulling Link over her until his torso was resting gently between her thighs.

"Do it, hero," she said, her eyes burning with intensity. "Thrust your mighty cock inside me."

She was so ready to make love with him, but the actual sensation of his cock sliding into her still took her breath away. Zelda gasped as the long shaft filled her vagina, the tip immediately touching her upon the highest point. It was like a thousand butterflies were landing all over her skin, and she wanted more.

"Oh, YES!" she screamed, feeling him gently thrust a second time. "Faster, Link. Please, please go faster. I can take it. I

can... Oh goddess Hylia, yes!"

Her lover obliged, thrusting his hips against her thighs faster and faster. Between the thrusts and blinding lights of sex, Zelda suddenly recalled the wisdom of her godmother. The thickness of her thighs was a practical boon in these circumstances, and she was overjoyed to discover that her body type was perfect for such muscular hips and his thick, glorious cock. She felt a tear slide down her cheek as she wrapped her arms around Link, smiling with happiness as the memory of Urbosa blessed their night of passion.

As the two lovers climbed to the highest summit, she felt a familiar pulse of life within her. She could feel his cock trembling against the walls of her vagina, so the princess immediately pulled Link closer and whispered into his ear.

"I want you to come inside me, Link. Please, come inside me!"

She licked the tip of his ear, feeling a final thrust of his cock as he released hot cum within her. Their bodies tensed as one, Zelda moaning as the walls of her vagina closed in tight around his member. It was so good, so good that the feeling caused her skin to glow with a golden light. She felt absolutely divine, resting with her lover as their shared orgasm dripped down the inside of their thighs.

The wind outside continued to blow through the fields, billowing the walls of their tent as they lay side by side. The princess reclined against her lover, her fingers gliding over his chest as the outline of their bodies cast shadows on the wall. Without really thinking about it, she started to trace symbols on his skin, transcribing many of the Zonai runes that she knew so well.

As she listened to Link's heart beating in a slow, satisfied rhythm, Zelda traced the runes for *Love* on his skin.

Chapter 7

Zelda woke to the sound of a gentle pulse. She reached over to touch her lover, to feel his beating heart, but instead, her hands clutched the blankets and nothing more.

He was gone. The princess sat up from her bedroll, a lump of despair rising in her throat. She swept her eyes over the empty tent, listening for any movement that could possibly belong to the man she loved. There was only the pulsing sound, which she soon realized was coming from the other side of the tent.

She lifted the blankets away and crawled across the bedrolls, shivering slightly when the morning air touched her naked body. Resting on her chest and reaching her hands under the covers, Zelda soon discovered the source of the pulse. The Sheikah Slate continued to tremble in her hands as she examined it, noting the altered settings in the corner display. Strangely, it appeared that the sensors had been switched from mineral tracing to a creature setting.

She swiped her fingers across the screen, and the yellow backlight was soon replaced by a limited metadata profile alongside an attachment. She tapped her fingers twice on the file attachment, revealing an image of the creature who was now being tracked by the sensors.

As she examined the image, her warm smile was accompanied by a blush in her cheeks. A frivolous spirit moved her to lift her legs behind her and wave her feet up and down. Zelda's fingertips brushed lightly against the screen, and the princess felt her lower body grow hot as she admired certain qualities of the photograph. *It's so nice to see that smile first thing in the morning, she thought, among other things...*

She quickly pulled on her white dress and sandals, eager to pursue her quarry with the sensors to guide her.

There was still an ethereal quality to the morning as she moved across the fields. The sun had yet to rise over the Illumeni Plateau and the hills beyond, the setting moon now bathing the scenery in the soft, blue tones that exist between night and day. The sensors came to life as she stepped into the forest, beckoning her towards the lake with quick vibrations. She smiled as she aimed the slate over the lake, her eyes immediately drawn to the clothing strewn about the shoreline. Her skin began to glow when the sensors went mad, identifying the man in the image as his naked body emerged from the lake.

Zelda switched off the slate and made her way down the hill. “Leave it to the Hero of Hyrule to use the wonders of ancient technology just so he can take a scandalous photo,” she said, enjoying the luscious sight of Link as he waded through the shallow water, his cock becoming erect as he looked up at her. The view was certainly a nice way to begin her day.

The princess laid the slate down on the hill before swiftly unlacing her sandals. Stepping carefully on her bare feet, she moved closer to the edge of the lake, placing her hands on her hips and doing her best to sound reproachful. “So, now that you’ve modified my device and lured me out here, what do you intend to do with me?”

His response was the best of all possible responses. Link waded towards her, then reached out and wrapped his strong arms around Zelda’s waist. She yelled as he lowered her into the water, his head resting against her torso, but her surprise soon turned to joy as Zelda felt her body pressed against her lover. She laughed as his hands moved up her dress, relishing the sensations of contact as her naked legs brushed against his chest and his hard cock. Her joy quickly turned to curiosity as Link carried her through the shallow waters, lowering her gently to the edge of a smooth boulder so she

could sit comfortably, with only her legs submerged in the water.

Zelda shook with excitement as Link lifted up the corners of her wet dress, bundling the fabric in his hands as he unveiled her legs, her thighs, and finally her most intimate regions. She giggled at his surprised expression when he discovered she was not wearing any undergarments. *That's right, my love. It's always good to plan ahead.*

His smile was positively wild with desire as he bowed his head, lowering himself over her middle. She inhaled sharply when she felt his mouth touch her, and soon her senses were aflame as his tongue glided across her outer folds. The sight of his mouth pressed against her vagina was almost as glorious as the rush of ecstasy brought on by the flick of his tongue.

The princess lost all sense of time, but it no longer mattered when all she needed was her lover between her legs, pleasuring her in this marvelous way. She thrust her hand downward and ran her fingers through his wet hair, pressing down with her palm to encourage his skillful ministrations.

“Mm, just when I thought it couldn't get any better,” she said, a heavy moan escaping her when his tongue moved deep inside her. “Ohh! Please don't stop, Link! Your mouth... It feels so... so sublime! I'm almost there. Just keep going...”

Her body spasmed without warning, Zelda's open legs quivering in orgasm. She leaned back against the boulder, listening to spring water trickle down the mountainside.

The need to press her body against him overwhelmed Zelda, so much so that she nearly tore her dress while pulling it over her head. She let herself slip off the boulder, completely nude as she dove into the shallow waters beside him.

“Come here, lover,” she whispered urgently, wrapping her arms around Link's shoulders, pressing her soft bosom

against his firm chest as she kissed his neck. Her kisses became even more urgent when she felt the thick and solid shaft of his penis laying against her stomach. She reached down, slipping her fingers around his cock, eagerly touching his member as it throbbed with life. “Oh Link, why didn’t we do this sort of thing sooner?”

The princess never expected a response to this question, so it astonished her when she heard him speak. She listened in awe as her lover explained his past actions, the reasons why he was hesitant to express his love for her. As she listened, her hand remained motionless over his manhood, her attention and her emotions fervently focused on his heartfelt words.

She could feel a tear running down her cheek as Link told her that he always respected her as his princess and, more importantly, as an exceptional woman. He never wanted to break her heart, for how could he risk breaking the heart of someone so wonderful when their destinies would inevitably lead them down a dangerous road?

When he finished speaking, Zelda wiped away the tears and took his hand in hers. They waded through the shallow waters together, stopping only when they reached the rocks lining the shore. “Link, turn around and face me,” she said, gently positioning him so that he could rest his back against the rocks if he so desired.

With her lover in position, she lowered herself into the shallow waters until the surface of the lake touched her breasts. Before Link could protest, she wrapped one hand around the base of his cock and leaned in, pressing her lips along the shaft.

“When we’re alone together, let’s forget about titles and destinies, shall we?” she said, lightly kissing the tip of his cock. “We’ll forget about being a princess and her knight. You don’t have to be the Hero of Hyrule, and I can stop worrying about channeling the powers of the goddess. Let’s

just be two people who are madly in love.”

When her mouth opened over his cock, Zelda delighted in the sounds of bliss that Link was making as her lips moved up and down the shaft.

She could feel her level of passion rising with her lover, and soon her mouth was moving so quickly that she could feel his cock at the back of her throat. When the length of him was almost too much to handle, Zelda slowly drew back and ran her tongue over his smooth, velvety skin. Her hand reached up to grasp his balls as she licked him, enchanted by every little curve and bump of his thick, delicious manhood.

Her tongue slid over and around the tip, and soon she tasted a salty droplet of liquid that presaged his orgasm. She was elated to discover that her lover tasted so good. When a strange impulse struck her, she could no longer deny her instincts. She slapped Link across his left buttock and gripped his tender flesh, pulling him closer and closer as his cock moved further inside her mouth.

Those same instincts came in handy when Zelda realized his cock was twitching. When she heard Link cry out in passion, the princess slid his cock out of her mouth and aimed the tip towards her chest. He soon released multiple streams of cum all over the top of her chest, causing both lovers to moan in ecstasy. She leaned forward as he orgasmed, slipping his shaft between her breasts so she could feel his hot, glorious potion dripping down her chest and into the water all around her.

Her fingers lingered over the cum dripping down her body. Her hands drifted down her torso as she reveled in the sensation, slipping one of her fingers into her mouth so she could taste him once again. Before Link could apologize for something so wonderful, she quickly stood up in the waist-deep water and drew him close in a deep, passionate kiss. They held one another for the longest time, barely registering the fact that the morning sun was now rising over the hills.

“I suppose we should continue washing up, if we want to be ready for the journey ahead,” she said, lowering herself into the shallow water. “Of course, I wouldn’t say no to a little help...”

Link smiled, slipping into the water beside her. When he cupped the lake water in his hands and made sure it fell over her curving breasts, Zelda knew there were still many ways they could enjoy this marvelous bath.



A cool breeze moved through the canyon, grass and herbs swaying on either side as Zelda and Link led their ox down the path. The princess ran her hands through the long stems and purple flowers of cool safflina, her thoughts still lingering blissfully in Lake Illumeni. She was lost in those memories until the landscape changed, the canyon spreading out to reveal massive columns rising into the air. It was then that she could see their destination just beyond the ruins.

“The forgotten temple,” she whispered, impressed by the colossal façade of this ancient place. Of all the legends attributed to the temple, Zelda could easily believe that this mighty structure was once used to seal away evil at the dawn of their world. As she continued to admire the architecture

and artistry before them, she noticed a distant figure standing in the entryway high above them, waving his arms as he leaned against the scaffold railing.

“Princess!” The young man shouted into the canyon, his voice echoing between the cliffs. When they approached the scaffolding, the Sheikah scout made his way down the winding levels of hardwood and steel. Zelda noted how he looked so much like a younger version of Symin, his longer hair pinned into two stylish buns, and she wondered if they were closely related. He was certainly a helpful young man,

eager to guide their blue ox up the scaffolding as they made their way through the temple.

Her pulse quickened when she saw the dark outline of guardians all around them, hiding behind broken slabs of rock and perched on the soaring arches above. She had to remind herself that these were the broken husks of machines that Link had already destroyed. Even still, she could feel the goddess energy stirring within her when she saw a beam of sunlight reflected in those menacing, cyclopean eyes.

It was not long before they reached the altar at the end of the temple, where they found themselves standing before the goddess statue. There were a few lab assistants nearby who were taking notes on their slates, and above a series of platforms, Zelda could see birds resting in the ceiling arch behind the statue's head. It was then that she noticed the open sky above them, as seen through a gap in the ceiling where the masonry had cracked and crumbled. The princess knew the hidden tunnel would be waiting for them above.

After consulting with the lab assistants and making their way up the platforms, she surveyed the dark tunnel that reached back into the mountain. She prepared a torch for herself and handed one to Link, whom she found kneeling beside the rubble and broken pieces of the collapsed roof. He seemed terribly focused on something underfoot.

"What is it, Link?" she asked, touching him gently on the shoulder. Link reached into the broken pieces of rock, removing a bokoblin fang and holding it up for Zelda to examine. She took the fang and turned it around. It was fresh, as if the monster had lost it over the past month or so. Were the bokoblins entering the temple without their knowledge, or was the fang dropped by a predator after feasting on one of the goblin creatures?

She gave the fang back to Link, unable to ascribe any meaning to the piece. "We should move on," said the princess, in spite of the uneasy feeling that she had in the pit

of her stomach.

Cracking flint and steel together, Link set fire to their torches. The light only reached so far, making it necessary to watch their step as they approached the darkness. However, she found it strange how the uneven ground and broken rubble soon gave way to a passage of sorts. It certainly made it easier for their pack animal, but Zelda could not help being curious about the origins of this place as she scratched the blue ox behind its ears. The old legends were forefront in her mind, and she suddenly imagined that they were approaching a great evil that had once been sealed behind the temple walls.

The torchlight shimmered against a wall of paintings nearby, and she was grateful to be distracted from such ghastly thoughts. When they stood close enough to examine the painted imagery, however, her imagination was filled with entirely new nightmares. Strokes of red paint depicted a gruesome massacre. Warriors on horseback were riding down peasants, hurling their spears into victims from afar. A horde of monsters followed, grabbing hold of men and women who screamed as the beasts lowered them into their jaws.

Amidst the tragedy and chaos, there was a man riding a giant steed, wielding a trident high over his head. Somehow, this man was worse than all of the horrors taking place around him. His eyes were terrifying, even in these simple lines of paint, and she could not help feeling that he was solely responsible for this great calamity of the ancient past.

The princess touched the walls, her palm burning with energy as she focused on the man with the trident.

Her aura was soothed by the sound of the Sheikah Slate, which was now vibrating inside her satchel. Zelda removed the slate, reviewing the sensor settings that had been switched back to mineral tracing during their journey.

“The luminous stones are close by,” she said, gesturing to the path ahead. “There must be a lot of them if their light can be seen in the night sky.”

When they followed the sensors past the cave paintings, the signal echoing off ancient ruins that were too obscure to place, they soon discovered how right Zelda was.

The tunnel opened up into an immense cavern, blue-green stones scattered throughout the space. They marveled at the jagged stones that appeared to be growing from the walls, larger than any of the specimens that she had ever laid eyes upon. As they moved across a decaying bridge that swept across the cavern, they soon found that light from the stones was drowning out the glow of their torches. The princess looked back to the tunnel, leading upward to the forgotten temple, and she now understood how this cavern of luminescence would produce such a magnificent display when all other lights had gone out. And when they discovered the remains of a Zonai palace on the other side of the bridge, the scholarly side of Zelda was already busy making connections between ancient cultures and the souls trapped within the stones.

“Purah is going to do cartwheels when she learns about this place,” she said, gazing with wonder at the swirling spirals and jagged diamonds carved into the structure.

As Link tended to their gentle beast, Zelda entered the palace and accessed the translator program. She aimed the slate over the runes carved into the walls, deciphering the names of kings and queens, revealing the great deeds of a bygone civilization in bits and pieces of text. The hall gradually curved to the right, and when it finally straightened out, the underground passage was now pointing due south.

Surely this doesn't lead all the way to Hyrule Castle. The thought seemed absurd, but the possibility was intriguing. It wasn't until her foot struck something on the ground that she realized how much her heart was beating with excitement.

She stumbled forward a couple of steps, managing to catch hold of a stone wall to steady herself. Inspecting the ground, she soon discovered piles of broken rock, the shattered pieces glistening black under her torch. As Zelda held one of the pieces in her hand, she quickly caught sight of blue-green text scrawled across the walls.

There were glowing runes all around her, carved into the structure by spirits long gone.

The princess was shocked to see so many messages in one place. They were everywhere she looked, with no discernable order to their placement. Hardly knowing where to begin, she aimed the slate over nearby runes and waited for the program to decipher the first message.

Beware.

The translation faded away from the screen. Zelda furrowed her brow, glancing back at the wall in the hopes of finding more runes in the message. Instead, she found a new gathering of symbols written by a different hand.

We are being stolen.

Her pulse quickened as she felt a sense of dread descend upon her. She raised the slate over the walls, slowly capturing the cryptic, horrifying words that were left behind.

They are devouring us.

Her mind raced as she recalled the Lynel, broken and bloodied on the battlefield until it somehow absorbed the energy wisps. Some of the runes broke off before they could form complete thoughts. *Eaten. Stolen. Evil reborn. Beware.* There were other symbols that yielded fragmented text, which read aloud would give the impression of someone in pain, perhaps even screaming. One message was clearer than the others, although she wished she had never seen it. *The*

demon king shall rise again.

Zelda's boots scraped through a pile of ashes. She looked down and saw the remains of a long dead fire, broken stones and goblin clubs scattered across the floor. An empty sack rested near the wall, ripped and torn apart by creatures driven by malice.

The princess froze. There was one final message scratched into the wall. It was written in colossal runes that glimmered with green energy. Her hands moved upward on instinct, raising the slate over a message that Zelda was not sure she wanted to translate.

You are no longer alone.

She felt fingers touching her shoulder. The goddess energy flared to life inside her. She turned around, the devastating power quickly subsiding when she realized it was only Link standing behind her. He was holding his torch close to the wall, which caused some of the green energy to fade away. The overwhelming fear faded with the color, and the princess began to breathe a little easier.

As they faced the path ahead, she decided that fear and uncertainty would not stop her from moving forward. There were countless secrets to be discovered in this place, wisdom to be gathered from the echoes of the past. She would be the one to uncover the mysteries behind the luminous stone, wherever they led her, even if she had to face darkness and danger ahead.

Tucking the slate away, she took the reins of the ox in one hand and reached for Link with the other, her fingers intertwining with his own. She could feel his pulse, beating slow and confident. As they forged ahead, the princess smiled when she realized that her own pulse had slowed significantly, soon matching his rhythm beat for beat.

A distant chamber glowed with an intense blue-green energy,

promising unimaginable revelations. There was still a river of darkness to cross as they traveled through the Zonai palace, but one thought comforted Zelda amidst all of the possibilities.

She would not face the darkness alone.

Afterword

Zelda fans will likely notice that this story ends before the intense revelations of the 2019 Breath of the Wild sequel trailer, which promises to continue the story of the first game. While the ending may seem abrupt, it was always my intention to write a prelude story focused on romance and Zelda as a main character, especially since I am holding out hope that she will be a playable character in the sequel. I also wanted to write a story that could stand between the games and continue to exist online when the sequel is released, even though the sequel will probably include plot elements that do not support the themes of this story.

However, I do plan on picking up a copy of the sequel on release day, as I'm sure many of you also plan on doing. If there is the possibility of continuing this story in a second part, I will explore this option after my first playthrough. In the meantime, I look forward to your continued responses to this fan story, and I greatly appreciate the feedback left by readers through Archive of Our Own as the story progressed.

Until then, may we meet again in another story.